# A DISCOVRSE OF THE TRVE and Visible Markes of the Catholique *Church.*

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And newely Translated into Englisſh.

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# A TREATISE OF THE TRVE AND visible Notes of the Catholique Church.

MEN demaunde at this date, concerning the markes and authority of the church: the question beeyng rayſed by thoſe, who, when they ſee their errours to bee refelled, by the worde of God, obiecte vnto men, that are vnskilfull of theſe matters, the ſacred name of the Church: and by heaping vp the diſputations of auncient fathers againſt Heretiques, they bring vs into hatred, as though we had corrupted both the bookes of Gods worde, and alſo, as though by violating all authority of the church, we had (after the example of the [a] *Donatiſtes*) ſet vp altar againſt altar: to be ſhort, as though becauſe wee haue ſhaken of the yoke of *Babilon*, we had

[a] They were ſo called of one Donatus, who baptized ſuch as imbraced his opinions, though they were baptized before, and made a ſchiſme in the Church, about the yeere. 334.

A forſaken

10.818

forsaken the Church, without the which notwithstanding (euen as we our selues confesse) there is no saluation. And neither doth this subtle kinde of reasoning, driue away the vnskilfull onely from the knowledge of the truth, but also causeth, some euen amongest them, which seemed most stedfast to wauer. Furthermore, by this occasion very many take counsell betweene both sides, and as in opinions, they indeuour to mingle light with darknesse: so also in discerning of the true Church, they labour to mingle the bastardly or false marks, with the true and proper marks therof. But except men would willingly be deceiued, the deceit of these men might be very easely perceiued and auoyded. For, first men should demaund, what that Church should be, before they determine of the boundes of hir authoritie: which order they that doe not follow, commit truely that grosse error, and worthy of stripes, which they call

Men must first define the Church, before they enquire any thing of the authoritye thereof.

[a] That is, the begging or taking of [a] *Petitio principij*, that as granted: which is in cõtrouersie

Go to then let vs see what these men meane by the Catho-

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lique Church.

Theſe men holde (what ſo euer they diſſemble) that the Church (in which we ought to abide, if we will be ſaued) is an aſſemblie of Biſhops, whoſe calling and names may bee fet from the Apoſtles them ſelues. We ſay that this ſucceſſion which is meerely perſonall, neyther is the Church, neither any whit at all pertaynetly vnto thoſe that alleadge the ſame.

That the Catholique Church is not rightly called euery congregation, in which 1 is a ſucceſſion 2 of Biſhops.

That it is not the church, may appear euen vnto very children, firſt by this, ỹ vnder the name of the church, properly taken, it is certain, that not only the Paſtors, but alſo the flocks are comprehended: Now it is altogether ridiculous to define a part, as the whole it ſelfe, becauſe by that meanes the whole and the parte, ſhoulde be one and the ſelfe ſame thing. 1

The order of Biſhops is not the church.

They reply, that they vnderſtand together with the Paſtors, the very flocks them ſelues, cleauing vnto them. But this thing is alſo ridiculous, ſeeing that both heretticall, and backeſliding Paſtors, may ſucceed Paſtors of ſound iudge-

The conſent of a byſhop and of a flock is not alwayes 1 a note of a true church.

iudgement, and hereticall flockes true
2 sheepe: and some times in deed the Pa-
stors are hereticall, and the sheep true, &
contrary wise, true pastors may haue
hereticall sheepe. When that thing fal-
1 leth out: to wit, that both the Pastors
and the flockes, are heretticall, the very
aduersaries them selues dare not deny,
but that such a whole Church (although
it haue had auncestors in deed Apostol-
icall, & both the Pastors and the flocks,
do agree amongst themselues in falling
away) is yet notwithstanding altoge-
ther a false Churche, vnlesse they will
take these speeches, to wit, to be hereti-
call and vniuersal, for one and the selfe
same thing. But in the latter case, at
least wise in one part, there is found
falsehood, although on both sides that
personal succession may be found. Wher
fore neither the succession of persons by
it selfe, neither such maner of consent,
doth of necessitie proue a true Church,
for as much as, where both are found,
yet some times there maye be a false
church: and there in some sort may be a
true church, where the pastor dissenteth

from

from the sheepe, or the sheepe from the pastor. Now, that men may, by examples both past and present, proue that these things haue so often times fallen out, no man I suppose will denie.

But againe they say, that they dispute not of particular Churches, which they graunt may fall away, but of that Catholique or vniuersall Church, *which is the pillar & foundation of truth*. But how I pray you do they define this catholike Church? Firste by a certayne place, as those that will haue catholicke and Roman to be al one: Secondly, by the multitude, as they which vpbraide vs with fewnes. Let vs see, therfore what manner of arguments these be. They be (if they be kept within the iust rules of reasoning) vnlesse I be deceaued, these and such like. The church of Rome teacheth so: very many, in respect of a very few so beleeue, and so it was from hand deliuered vnto vs. Therefore this is the catholique truth. But who is so far void of all reason, that he seeth not here againe, *Petitio principij*, and the thing in controuersie to be taken as graunted?

1. Tim. 3. 15.

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2 Catholique and Roman are not all one.

Shew vs therefore, ye Sophisters, or at least wise teach vs probablie, firste how a part should bee whol (yᵗ we may graunt vnto you your Romish church, to be a principall member of the catholicke church). And then from whence, I pray you, haue ye learned, this Romish Church, to be ordayned for a perpetuall rule of truth: and from whence haue ye gathered that to be true, which is approued of the greatest number? Verely ye shall neuer proue this, out of the bookes of the old or new Testament. For those corrupt argumentes: *Vpon this rocke I haue builded my Church: I haue prayed for thee Peter that thy fayth faile not:* and that saying of Christe thrise repeated, *feed my sheepe*, with men not altogether ignorant of these thinges, need not any further confutation. But happely, ye will proue it out of the writinges of auncient fathers. As though for soth it were the same thing, to commende the faith and religion of the church of Rome (as long as it was worthy praise) and to establish hir for the catholicke church, or a perpetuall rule to the catholicke

Mat. 16. 18. Luk. 22. 23. Ioh. 21. 15. 16

church. And seeing that by the name of the church of *Rome* (if these flatterers will speake that they thinke) they doe vnderstand no other thing, than the bishop of *Rome* him selfe, what madnesse is this, I beseech you, to haue the deciding of so great a controuersie, to depend vpon y seat, in which their own writers being witnes, not so much the monsters of men, as Nathan himselfe, doth seeme to haue sit so many ages together.

These men replie, that the dignitie it selfe, and the authoritie of the seate, is not taken away by the faults of the persons: euen as the Leuiticall high priesthood, was true then also, when it was exercised by vngracious and wicked high priestes. And neither do we thinke that either the dignitie, or els the efficacie of the ministerie, may be abolished, though the faultes of the ministers (which thinge these men yet thinke when it pleseth them, as they that hang that their transubstantiation, vpon the intet of their sacrificing priestes a very rotten coard surely) but this we say that (their principle being graunted, to wit, I

that the Bysshop of Rome is that head, that should stand the catholique church, as in stead of a soule) it must altogether followe, that this head be wyse, if they will haue all his members, that is, the particular Churches to be wise: And againe, if that be frantick, that the whole Churche must be frantick also. Now, that the Romish Bishoppes haue beene frantick e many ages together, not onely as priuate men, but specially also as Bishops: that is to say, that euerie one of them almost haue bene, not onely the most wicked of all men in respecte of their conuersation, (which thing these men can not denie, vnlesse they would rather be conuinced by their owne testimonies:) but also as concerning the points of our religion, whilst that partly they haue neglected all true religion, and partly also haue set themselues against it, so much that (which thing two or three ages ago Petrarcha hath written, whose verses they commend) Rome hath beene a thousande yeares at the least, the temple of heresie, and hath vtterly subuerted (as much as was in hir)

all

all the offices of Christ, yea so far forth that shee hath exalted hir selfe, aboue Christe him selfe (as the Apostles Iohn and Paule greater than all exception haue forе tolde) all the beste approued writers, Greeke & Latin, being the Byshops of other churches, shall interpreting the same? vnlesse we haue sufficiently heretofore proued it, we are ready again to proue it, before all vpright iudges. Let this controuersie therefore, be firste decided. O yea Sophisters, before that ye of this fained foundation, as it were, graunted vnto you.

But go to, let vs graunt that the Byshoppes of Rome were suche, whose so great and large succession is alleadged by these men. Who yet vnlesse he be vtterly out of his wittes, will therefore conclude, that the bisheps of Rome, is the vniuersall head, to whome who so euer doth cleaue, is to be iudged a true member of the Catholique Church? And yet these be the sophistications of these godly fellowes, which will haue catholique and Romish to be one and the selfe same thing: to wit, because Paule wrote, that

Rom.1.18. *in his time, the faith of the Romans, was famous through out all the world.* But how much more rightly now̄e, may we say, that the fame of that whore, hath not onely filled the earth, but hath ascended also, euen to heauen: and that excellent epistle of the Apostle written to the olde *Romans*, ought now truely to be written against the *Romans* their successors.

2 Let vs now̄e come vnto those, who esteeme their catholicke churche, by the number and glorious shew of pages or seruants. Verely if these men speake truth, Christ and his flocke, shall iustly be pronounced excommunicat, and that multitude shal be the catholike church, which so often times cried out, *Take him* Mat.26.23. *away, take him away, crucifie him.* The Apostle also shall be found a lyar, writing to the Corinthians: *Brethren yee see* 1.Cor.1.26. *your calling: that we are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble*: to be shorte, then these men shall be worthie, (whom to confute we may take paines) when either by reason or examples, they shall proue, that there

The Catholike Church must not be esteemed by the multitude.

are more wise men than fooles. Now then, I thinke it doth sufficiently appeare, that, by this bare succession, which they brag of, that true catholike church, wherein we must abyde, cannot be discerned from the false. That the, from which we ought of necessitie to depart.

But yet, before that we conclude this place, we must refell an argument, which these Sophisters would haue to be deemed such a one as cannot be ouercome. For say they, the fathers so dispute, from the succession of bishoppes, against auncient heretiques. But againe what can be more corrupt than this subtle kind of reasoning? for this is that which is well knowne, euen to children, which they are wont to call an elench, [a] or a fallacy of composition and diuision.

How the fathers vsed the argumẽt of personall succession.

[a] The fallacie of composition or diuision is a false conclusion, made by a wrong application of wordes alleadged or spoken referring that to one, which is alleadged, or spoken to an other.

First therfore I deny, that any of the auncient fathers, were mynded to vse the recitall of Bishops, but to haue recourse rather euen to the Apostles. And why so? that the authoritie of doctrine,

doctrine, rather than of persons shoulde be mainteined: But these men obiect vnto vs, the succession of their bishops, not in deede bishops, so far letting passe the mention of that Apostolicall doctrine, that they woulde haue it accounted a wicked thing, to demaund it at his handes, that woulde proue him selfe to succeed the auncient byshoppes. Now I pray you, howe many authors of blasphemies, haue sit in those chiefe seates of *Alexandria*, *Antioche*, *Constantinople*: yea, what seat will these men shew me somewhat more famous, where some hereticall bishops, haue not holde their seate? And as touching the *Romish* chayre, from which these men by a rotte coard hang the catholique church. *Honorius* the [a] *Monothelite*, openly condemned of the first generall councell and priuately of *Agatho* another *Roman* Bishoppe: And *Iohn* the 22. thinking euill touching the soule of man: in like manner condemned of the colledge

[a] Monothelites, were certain heretiks about the years. 565, who affirmed that there was but one will and one action in Christ: denying that there was in him two naturall willes and actions, which might aunswere to his two natures.

colledge of *Sorbon* in *Paris*, were founde to haue sit in that seate. To let passe, [a] *Liberius*, [b] *Vigilius*, and [c] *Anastasius*, whom I see of some to be excused, although *Gratian. 2. Dist.* 19. reckeneth this last also as an *Acatian* heretique amongst the condemned Popes.

[a] Liberius for ambitions sake fell into the Arrian heresie.

[b] He, while Siluerius the Pope liued (by the ayde of Belisarius, the captaine of the Emperors armie, obteined the popedome.

[c] He meaneth of Anastasius the 2. who fell into the hieresie of Arrius and Eutiches, which heresies Acatius also him selfe did propound, about the yeere, 484.

But if any man would obiect, ỹ these are blotted out of the number of Byshops, and therfore are not comprehended in that title or role of succession: yet this he shal be inforced to graunt vs, to wit, that the succession of ỹ seat of *Rome*, was then at the least broken of, when these were therefore blotted out (which persons notwithstanding they themselues as yet number in their Catologue) because they had declined from the Apostolicall doctrine. Wherupon followeth that which *Tertulian* rightly affirmeth that religion ought to be proued or tried not by the persons, but the persons by religion. Tertulian.

ligion. But here truly I confesse, that I do somwhat ouershot my self, for seeing the question is of doctrine, what doth this appertaine, to the Bysshops of the Churche of *Rome*, whome all Christendome knoweth nowe so manye yeeres, to haue beene for nothing lesse carefull, then for anye doctrine, eyther true or false, but onely for to establishe and enlarge theire owne tyrannie.

But they will say, no man hath condēned theese Popes. I confes it. For who would haue taken to himself this lawful authority against their tiranny, who had perswaded all men, that they ought to be iudged of none? Therefore there hath beene not of late onely, but many ages together, not an interruption, but a full abruption or renting of the succession of *Rome*, from the body of the catholique true church, except peraduenture these men iudge, that it is something lesse, eyther to bellæue nothing, or to teache nothing, than to be an Heretique.

And I beseeche you what impudencie

is

is this, to haue the knowledge of trueth to hang vpon succession: wheras on the contrary, these men themselues can not deny, but that the trueth ought necessarily to go before succession. True doctrine ought to go before true succession.

And these Sophisters, if they had bene in the times of Christ, by what Bishoply succession, would they haue acknowledged the true church: surely not by the title or name of the Leuiticall high priests: because that priesthood was then at an end: and Christ cannot be called the successour of *Aaron* priestly *Iudaisme* be agayne established: wherefore also *he is sayd to be made a high priest, not according to the order of Leui, but according to the order of Melchisedec.* Therefore the holy men at that time, acknowledged the Catholique church, without the marke of personall succession: to wit, by the comparison of the doctrine of the Prophetes, with the doctrine of Christe him selfe, and the Apostles. Which is so farre true, that on the contrarye, none haue lesse acknowledged Christe, than they that haue cleaued to a Bythoply succession. Therefore that personall The Christian church in the time of Christe, coulde not be knowne by the succession of Persons. Heb. 7. 16. 17

succession, is no true and perpetuall marke of the Catholique Church.

These men happely, beeing driuen from the Leuitirall succession, will againe obiect another succession from the Prophetes. But neyther so, shall they speake the truth, if they sticke in the persons them selues, for the succession of Prophetes was not perpetuall, no more than the succession of Preists: yea rather it was broken of a long time, especially after *Malachie*. They will also obiect vnto vs that saying: *The Scribes & Pharises sit in Moses chaire*. But agayne, they shold remember, ỳ same Christ to haue said: *Take heed of the leauen of the Pharisees*: And therefore by that saying of Christ, we are not called backe to a succession of persons, but to a succession of doctrine.

Mat. 23. 2.

Mat. 16. 6.

But I haue besides an other thing more peremptorye (as they them selues speake) to aunswere againste that, in which these men falsly boast themselues to followe the authoritie of the Fathers in discrying the church, by which thing also their wilines may more and

more

more be made manifest. I denie therefore, that any of the auncient fathers haue at any time made mention of this succession, but either against Schismatiques, whilest yet a lawfull succession remayned, (as it was done against the *Donatistes*) or against them, whiche brought forth new bookes of our religion, as were, in the beginning almost an infinite nūber as [a] *Simon*, [b] *Valentine*, [c] *Basilides*, [d] *Montane*, to conclude ẏ whole troup of most shamelesse men. After this sort the Fathers of right iudgement, gathered and reserued against these

The auncient fathers vsed not the argument of personall succession against all heretiques.

[a] I suppose that he speketh here of Simō Magus, mentioned in Act. 8. of whom many thinges are writtē in the old writers, specially he affirmed that Christe was not come, neither suffered any thing of the Iewes, but that he himself was Christ

[b] He amongst other things taught, that Christ the sonne of God, tooke not mans flesh of the virgin, but that he had a spirituall or heauēly body, which passed thorow the virgin Marie, as water thorovv a pipe or Conduit. He vvas about the yeere. 150.

[c] He affirmed, that Christ appeared not in the substance of flesh, but in a phantasticall body, & that one Simon vvas crucified in his steede, about the yeare. 124.

[d] He taught that Christe vvas not very man, and that he ascended into heauen vvithout his flesh, and first made lavves for abstinence from meates and marriages, hee vvas in the yeare. 180.

Such as pretended to be inspired with reuelations. The Messalian heretiques were so called, who affirmed that baptisme and the Lords supper did neither profit nor hurt, but that those which gaue themselues to prayer onely or sleeping should be inspired with the spirite, which being once receyued, afterwards they had no need of the word, or any other exercise of godlines, but that he that was so inspired, was altogether without sinne, and did foresee thinges to come, and did sometimes behold God with their eies.

[e] *Enthusiasts*, saying. If your doctrine be true, eyther there hath not beene euer yet anye churche, or the doctrine which you alleage is old and antient. But that both these thinges are false, appeareth by that, both because the apostles haue gathered together the churche of Christe, and you teach your doctrines, as taken not out of the writings of the Apostles, but as newely reuealed vnto you by the holy ghost. And againe, (sayd the fathers,) both these things appeare by that, that we count the beginnings of our churches, by ascending vpward, euen to the Apostles themselues: but you could not haue receiued from the Apostles your thinges, which ye first deuised.

There remained one thing, which the moste subtile of those moste fantastical persons obiected, to wit, that all things were not reuealed to the apostles, and therfore that men ought to beleeue their reuela-

reuelations also. But *Tertulian* (whom I maruail, could afterward be deceiued vñ *Montanus* holy ghoste) most plentifully, and strongly confuteth this prescription, shewing that the Lord hath neither kept backe any thing from the apostles, (the chiefe builders of his church:) nor againe, that the apostles haue concealed, any of those things, which they had receiued of Christe. After this sort I say, the fathers vsed the argument of the succession of persons againste those heretiques, altogether vñ demonstration as it were. But they vsed it not in like sorte, againste ỹ [a] *Samosatans* [b] *Sabellians*, [c] *Arrians*, [d] *Pelagians*: to be short, againste anye with whome the question was not of the very bookes, but of the

[a] So called of Paulus Samosatenus, who denied the sonne of God, to haue descended from heauen, but that Christ did proceed from Marie in the earth, hee was about the yeare, 272.

[b] So called of one Sabellius, who taught that there was but onely one person in the godhead & confessed that the trinity was distincted in respect of names only, & not in respecte of persons. He was about the yeare 320.

[c] So called of one Arrius, who affirmed, that the Son was not truly & naturally God, neither coeternall with the father, but to haue had a beginning, & to be made of nothing, he was about the yere, 320

[d] So called of one Pellagius, who held free will, and that euery man might obtayne saluation by his owne workes: that infants were borne, without originall sin: and that Adam hurt himselfe onely by his fall. He was about the yeare, 466.

meaning, because this had beene verie foolishe.

Briefly therfore I answere these two thinges: that the auncient Fathers, whose authoritie these men shamelessie abuse, haue, neither at any time seperated the succession of their bishops, from the succession of the Apostolical doctrine: nor haue set this succession, against any other heretiques, but against those, of whom some new reuelation was pretended: As at this day of the [a] *Anabaptistes*, [b] *Libertines* [c] *Swingfeldians*. And therefore, for as muche as now the controuersie is, betwixt the *Romanistes* and vs, for two thinges onely, to wit, for the interpretation of the Scripture: and whether the wrytinges of the Prophetes and Apostles, doe most fully contayne, what so euer we ought to beleeue, it is proued that they, in the first point, impudently abuse the example of the fathers, in alleadging against vs the argument of succession: and in the

[a] They mayntaine amongest other errors, reuelations, and take avvay the baptisme of infants.

[b] They (casting a side all feare of God vvhat so euer) hold, that men may lyue as they list.

[c] So called of one Casper Svvingfeldius, vvho held, the same matters that the Anabaptistes do.

the other, is ministred vnto vs a sure weapon, to confute them. And that this succession also was alleadged against the *Donatistes* as *Schismatickes*, this nothing toucheth vs, whom these men account, not properly for *Scismatickes*, but for heretiques: of which thing notwithstanding, we will say some thing in his proper place.

a That the false church of Rome, is not onely not propped vp, by the argument deriued frō the personal succession of the apostles: but also ouerthrown, although the questiō, be not of the doctrine

b That there vvas neuer any Apostolicall, vniuersall ministeriall head, and therefore that his succession is not Apostolicall.

a But go to, let vs gratify them a litle, and (which thing may be done without any preiudice of the trueth). Let vs graunt vnto these men how much force soeuer they can imagine, of that their personall succession. What shall this I beseech you, help their cause?

b For, that we may begin, at the highest step of their *Hierarchie*, or priestlike gouernement, as they call it, that is, at that vniuersall mynisteriall head (vnto whome they afterwarde, appropriated the name of Pope, which before was common to all Bishoppes,) they shall as easely finde the Diuell him selfe in the kingdome of God, as any such head, either in the bookes of the newe Testament, or in the auncient church. For ve-

rie children know this, how false, folish, and absurd arguments they be, whatsoeuer they bring out of the scriptures to proue the same. And as concerning the history of that auncient purer church: (that is to say, in this behalfe verelie, euen to the tymes of that manslaier *Phocas*) they shall finde none, that so interpreted the primacies, and glorious titles, which are attributed to the bishop of *Rome* (although in deed the bishops of *Rome*, ambitiouslie sought nothing more, and there wanted not some, who most shamefully euen then flattered the) as that they did for all that, giue this degree of vniuersall head vnto him. Wherfore, they haue not Christ, nor *Peter*, but that most vile man of al, *Phocas* I say, the emperor, for the author of this vniuersallitie: and they haue *Boniface* the thirde, the head or beginner of this tyrannie: or (that I may vse the words of *Gregorie* the great himselfe) the chiefe or head of *Antichristianisme*: in so much, that the Romishe popedome, doth but onely sixtene yeares at the most, goe before *Mahumetisme*, or the turkishe religion.

gion.

But, by what sleightes, that monster hath vsurped, and attayned this tyrannie, who, I praie you, at this day can be ignorant, vnlesse he be ignorant of histories, or whose eyes Satan hath blinded: yea, seeing that this moste holy father, doth boast him selfe to be, not the successor of *Peter* alone, but of *Paul* also (whose heades being cut off, not so much by newes hang men, as by the Pope himselfe, he ingraueth in these his leaden seales): it must needs be, either that afterward two heads were growen into one, whose authoritie afterward, passed forth to this successor of them both: or els that neither *Peter* nor *Paule*, were this onely vniuersal, ministeriall head: except he woulde rather acknowledge, that the catholique churche, hath had at the beginning two heades vppon the earth.

But what say I: that I may speake nothing here of so many *Antipopes*, or Popes one against an other, when as *Liberius* and *Damasus*, at one and the same time, (as all men affirme), obtay-

ned that seate of *Rome*, where was then that one vniuersall head? And let these thinges be sufficiently spoken, touching the deliuerie of that spirituall sworde from hand to hand.

And as concerning that other sworde, which they call, secular or politique, wherewith they haue ouerthrowen all magistracie: From whence I pray you do they take the beginning of this iurisdiction? for, though we shoulde beleeue that fable, of the donation or gyfte of *Constantine*, to be as true, as it was shamefully fayned, yet truely it shal not be set from the apostles, but frō the emperor: neither yet graunted by Christ, or by *Peter*, but by men. Which thing notwithstanding, was neyther lawfull for *Constantine* to do, nor for the Bishoppe of *Rome* to receaue, although it had beene willingly offered him. Wherefore, if they shall of their owne authoritie, require againe these two feathers, the churche those former, to wit, the ecclesiasticall gouernement, and kinges and Princes these latter, to wit, ciuill iurisdiction and authoritie (both which in

their

their time shall come to passe) this fellow will then appeare, not the head of the church, but an vnfeathered cuckow. And these things concerning this head, haue I put down in few words, because they haue of late, by them of our side verie plentifully, both out of the worde of God, & out of the truest histories of former times, & to be short, out of the testimonies of ỳ Popes thẽselues, ben manifestly declared and plentifully proued.

That there can be noe Apostolicall succession in the Cardinalles, Metrapolitanes, Primates, or Archbishops

Now the head of this succession being cut off, what shall the rest of the body be, but a rotten and stinking carkas? Truely them selues are compelled to confesse, that the next degree vnto this head, to wit, the order of Cardinalles, as it is nowe, cannot be set from the more auncient time. There follow primates and Archbishoppes, for scarce the verie name of Patriarkshippe, is yet remayning, and *Mahomet*, at the length hath ended the matter incontrouersie, which firste arose, betweene the [a]*Quartumviri*, and afterwarde betweene the

[a] That is, those foure men that tooke vppon them, the gouernment of the vvhol world hereaneth the foure Patriarches, to wit, Hierusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople & Rome.

[b]*Quin-*

[a] That is the fiue mē that toke vppon them the goueremente of the world.

[a] *Quintumuiri.* Therefore the Nicene councell it selfe, doth not refer the beginning of these offices, to the word of God, or Apostolicall institution, eyther written, or not written, but to ancient custome. So that neither can this succession, be thought to be Apostolicall.

The degree of Bishopps wherin they are exalted aboue the rest of the Ministers or Pastors, was vnknowen to the Apostles and therfore that there is no Apostolicall succession therof.

There rest yet Bishoppes so called of them, to wit, which are set in euerie dioceese aboue ministers (for the other inferiour orders, these pleaders of succession, nothing esteeme,) whose onely succession neuertheless, hath some shew of Apostolicall succession. But it maye plainely apeare, out of the firste Epistle to the *Corinth*: not onely that there was no suche degree of Bishops ordeyned by the Apostles, as immediatly afterward was brought into the Church, after the times of ỹ apostles: neither ỹ ther was any such allowed of the Apostle, to wit, ỹ ther should be one degree of a bishop, and an other of a minister, or that some man should be called a Bishoppe, not in respect of a flocke, but in respect of his fel low elders. For who doubteth, but that

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the Apostle, woulde haue gyuen this counsel vnto the *Corinthians*, or himselfe woulde haue performed it, or haue attributed it to *Cephas* or *Apollo*, if (which thing *Hierome* hath written to *Euagrius*, and in his commentaries vpon the first Epistle to *Titus*) he had iudged this remedie profitable, much more necessarie, for the bryding of *Schismes*? But whether it were lawfull, to ordayne this degree in the Church, or not (for of this I like not nowe to dispute) that thing is not only apparant out of *Hierom*, vpon ỹ epistle to *Titus*, ỹ Bishops are greater than ministers, rather by custome, than by the truth of the Lords appoyntment: But also by witnesses which these men (as greater than all exception), are accustomed to alleadge, as *Lucius* ỹ Pope, *Clemens* the second, *Anacletus* (vnlesse their Epistles be rather counterfaite, which yet these men cite for authentiall.) *Lombard* in his fourth booke of sententes the 24. distinct: *Gratian*, and to be short *Cardinall Cusan*, in his booke of the vniuersall vnitie, ỹ *Platina*, in the life of Pope *Bonifacius* ỹ third: al which plainly

ly witnesse, that all this *Hierarchit all* or priestlike gouernment aboue ministers was deuised by men, after the example of the *Roman* empyre, that is to say, that it is the true *Image of the beast, described in the reuelation of Iohn.* For whose cause some, in the beginning also did trauaile which ment not to performe that which afterward insued. The thing it selfe in fine, taught vs, that it was a matter of great importance to decline, euen but a nailes breath from the word of God.

Reuel. 13.1.
Reuel, 14.9.

The conclusion of the disputation, touching the succession of persons, sundred from the succession of doctrine.

Now, for as much as these thinges be so, that is, seeing neither this succession of persons, is a sufficient, true and proper marke of the Churche, nor (though we should graunt it such) pertayneth any thing at all, to this popishe vizard. What is then the matter, wherein we see some at this day so greatly to sticke, that no small number (as though [a] *Gorgons* head were caste in the way), goe backe? Verely this is the strength of the spirite of error, that they which are proued and pure, may be made manifest.

[a] That is some fearefull & terrible thing.

Now let vs heare also, suche an other testi-

testimonie of their impudencie: they will haue that to be iudged a Church, where there continueth an ordinary calling, to the holy ministerie. But what other thing is this, than (after the example of that hostile of *Chalcis*) to set before vs a game, the same meate new dressed? Notwithstanding, because here againe, I see some licke as it were at a rocke, and that, not without danger of shipwrack: I will indeuour and that as it were by the wind of truth, hence to deliuer them, that are cast vpon this coast.

That the canonicall ordeyning of Ministers, is not a perpetuall and necessary mark of the Catholique Church.

Truely, if a man bid them declare vnto vs, what they vnderstād, by the name of ordination, (which requeste in this question, is altogether honest and verie necessarie) then the clawes of these Lions, will openly shew themselues. They will alledge, that of the Apostle: *How shall they preache vnlesse they be sent*: and that saying: *All things ought to be done in the house of God, rightly and in order*. We agree vnto it. They will say, that, all that order is comprehended, in the olde Canons, which may not, or ought not, by any meanes be broken.

Pastors must in deede, alwayes be sent by the Lorde, but there is not alwayes alike order of their sending

Rom. 10. 15.
1. Cor. 14. 40

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First we aunswere, that it is playne, by the comparison of the very *Canons*, that one, and the same order in the Christian Churches, neither alwayes hath beene prescribed, nor euerie where kept: and that also, the diuersitie of circumstances, cannot suffer this, that one order in these thinges, shoulde be euerie where, and alwayes exactly obserued: and therefore very vnseasonable, is the obseruation, euen of the moste auncient and best *Canons* required, as absolutely and necessarilie to be kept. And if they be here so impudent, that they will deny this thing, truely I will convince them as manifest offenders. For if it be vnlawfull, to omit any thing of the *Canons* without any exception: From whence commeth that greate gaine, vnto the court of *Rome*, by dispensation also euen with the law of God: neither truely will I easely suffer my self, to be thrust from this exception.

Although the canonicall ordination be established for a perpetuall marke of the catholique church yet it reproueth the false church of Rome.

But go to, we are content here to do these men a pleasure, let vs therfore say (the disputation of this exception beyng deferred) that vocation is an order, not onely

onely agreable to the worde of God, but also euen to the verie auncient pure Canons, by which an ecclesiasticall office, is committed to some man. Let vs graunt them also (yet with no preiudice of the truth) that there also the true Church is to be seene, where this order continueth sound and pure, yet I say, that by that meanes, it most certainely appeareth that that Popishe Churche is, nothing lesse than that catholique church, whose name it chalengeth to hir selfe: For tell me, what is this order? to wit, that a lawfull knowledge of learning, and of manners going before, and the order of ecclesiasticall degrees beeing not rashly violated: some man (by the free consent of any whole Church, touching which ꝙ question is) being appointed to this holy ministerie, is ordained by thē, of whom he ought, that is, is put into the possession as it were of his office. And if anie man breake this order, that is, if a fault happen, either in the examination, or in the election, all the pure Canons commaund, all that, to be iudged of no effect: and so they subiect him, that ordayneth

neth the minister, to make greeuous punishmentes. That this is so, they them selues cannot denie. Wherefore I woulde not load many leaues, with the alleadging of *Canons*.

Now let these men come forth, and let them alleadge vnto vs, euen one amongst all their clergie, in whome this order, hath beene thoroughly obserued. I demaund not, whether these thinges, prescribed both by the worde of God, and also by the pure *Canons*, haue bene exactly obserued of them now a long time. But this I aske, whether there be any vse of election, amongest them in the most places, seeing that ỳ Romish harlot, hath couenaunted with Kings & Princes, for the abolishment of it, and suffereth those bargaines to be printed, and set out to sale. Now where there remaineth any shew of election, woulde a man haue thought any of them, coulde haue beene so impudent, ỳ they shoulde be so bold, as to denie, that those offices which the whole worlde knoweth, are openly gotten by purchase: and that by buying free voyces (which thing is spe-

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tially practised, amongst them that seke for priesthood, and Canonicall persons (as they call them, that is to say amongst swine and asses, which are altogether vncleane beastes) to be so bold I saye, as to denie it, to be anye other thing, than an abhominable treading vnder foote of all law, both Gods owne, and of that purer part of the canon law (as they call it)? And of the triall, both of doctrine and maners, the lawful witnesses, for sooth, be those wicked men, getting their liuing by no other means but by dayly and open periuries, partly in the prouinces of the Church of Rome, partly, in the lappe of that Romish harlotte? And this thing for sooth the high Bishops know not, which begin their bulles with these wordes, *The honestie of life and maners, vppon which commending the same vnto vs, by a credible testimonie, &c.* What say I? their lawes of giuing, either ordinarie, or falling out vpon some (as they call them) and the lawes of resignation, where were they deuised, braied, strained out, & at length, set out and deliuered, to make mad,



All

both the highest and the lowest, but in the deuilles kitchin? And yet these men for sooth, will proue the Ecclesiasticall calling, to remaine in their possession.

That the false clergie of Rome doth rashly dispute against vs, for the laying on of hands.

But againe let vs heare that, that may more conuince these mens shamelesnesse. When they dispute with vs of a calling, they are wont to vrge the laying on of hands, as though the true difference of a lawfull and counterfaite calling consisted in that. But I suppose, these good men haue not forgotten that, which I euen now saide, to wit, that by al the old canons his ordination should be iudged of no force, who hath not bene lawfully examined and chosen, and they that ordeyne suche, to be subiect also to very greeuous punishment. And therefore they doe vainely challenge vnto them selues that, which is no where found amongst them.

That no Pastors are ordeyned by the laying on of handes, but being alredy ordained, are put into the possession of their office and commended vnto God.

Moreouer this also they should know, that Pastours, are not made by the laying on of hands, but being ordeined by a lawfull calling (which is the voyce of God) are so commended, and put into ye possession of the ministery. For, wheras they

they reckon, this ceremony of laying on of handes, amongst sacramentes, by the same reason that they reckon baptisme, and the supper of the Lord: we say, that it is altogether a vaine dotage, seeing there is no expresse commaundement of that ceremonie extant, neither is there ioyned vnto it, any sacramentall promise, neyther doe we reiect, eyther this ceremony, or iudge to bee vnprofitable the prayers of the church commending, and as it were, offering vnto God, the Pastor that hee hath sent them, for the sending of God, is a lawful calling. But here surely it falleth out with these hypocrites, as it hath in other things also, to wit, that these things being omitted, in which a true calling consisteth (that is to say the trial of doctrine, and of life, and a lawfull election of the whole Church) they sticke in the outward ceremonie, whiche ceremonie also they haue defiled, with infinit vicelike rites: that I may let passe, that horrible sale of benefices and treading vnder foote of, the old cannons, made, touching the multiplication of benefices (as they call them)

them) and touching ordination, by ouer leaping (as they speake of inferior orders.) And yet notwithstanding, they themselues are not ignorant, that, by the ful consent of the ancient Synodes, not onely ordination, but also, other better parts of a calling, are, by ye meanes, judged of no force.

That euen a lawfull ordination, is not a perpetuall and altogether a necessarye marke of the true church, eyther Catholique or particular.

But goe to, let us put the case also, that all these men, were both lawfullye chosen and ordeined. Shal therfore their congregation be the catholique church, or not rather a denne of theeues, if in abusing their calling, they turne lighte into darkenesse, and perfourme this one thing alone, to make slaues to Sathan, the sheepe, that shoulde bee brought to Christe. And yet if forsooth, the head of his false Church doe this (as what els I pray you doth he?) he will not endure this, that he may be judged of any mortall man. For so these men haue beene bolde, nowe a long time, not onely to speake, but also to write. And if this bee playnely to play the *Antichrist*: what is this Catholique Church (I beseech you) of which *Antichrist* is the head.

Where-

Wherefore, (that I may at the length conclude this place) I suppose that these two thinges, doe neuer sufficiently appeare, that neither a false succession of persons, nor the obseruation of an outwarde vocation, is that necessarye, and perpetuall marke, of the true Churche, which the Logitians call proper after the [a] fourth sort. Neither although it shoulde be so, doe these thinges at any thing at all belong to the Church of Rome, (such as now it is) that is vnto the Pope-dome: but rather what argumets soeuer conuince the Churche of *Antichrist*, the same doe so euidently appeare in this Harlot, that, he that would not acknowledge, flye from, and detest her, as an adultresse forsaken of her husbande, truelye, must either nothing regarde these thinges or elle be without all vnderstanding.

The conclusion of the whole former disputation, of the personal succession & ordination.

[a] That is, whiche agreeth to euery one of the kind, onely to the kind, and always to the kinde: as to be apte to laugh, agreeth to all men, to men only and alwaies to them, and to euerye particuler of that kinde.

A true definition of the true church, and a proper, necessary and perpetuall marke of the same.

Nowe, because we haue determined, not onely to set out the false markes, (which thinges wee suppose wee haue done) but also, to populte out as it were



with same.

with the finger, the true and proper markes of the Church. Go to let us attempt this latter point. We lay therefore, that a true definition of a true Church, either particularly, or vniuersally considered, is that, by which it is said to be a congregation, that confesseth the true Iesus Christe their onely Sauiour. For we lay, that Iesus Christe, is that onely foundation, of that true spirituall house of God. Iesus Christe onely, is the soule of that mysticall bodie: Iesus Christe onely, is the square of that building.

The true Christe must be discerned from the false, by the onely writings of the Prophets & Apostles.

The aduersaries will answere, that they also acknowledge, and preache the same thing. Therefore we do adde (seeing there be many false Christes) that we dispute of the true Christe. These men also will replie, that they haue done, and do the same. In the third place therefore we adde, that he is in deed the true Christ, that hath most fully reuealed him selfe, by the mouth of his Prophets and Apostles. And the mouth of the Prophetes and Apostles, we interpret to be, their authenticall writings,

wherin we affirme, are most fully, and moste perfectly comprehended all the pointes of the Christian faith, partly plainely, and partly by necessary consequences to be gathered thereof.

For, we beleeue it, to be as absurd, to thinke, that the Apostles were ignorant of some thing, of the misteries of christianitie, or not to haue reuealed all thinges vnto the worlde (both which *Tertulian* hath iustly accounted, verie greate pointes of madnesse): as not to haue put in writing, all things necessarie to saluation: or, to be short, not so to haue put them downe, that, either they should not be plaine inough of them selues, or, if any thing be written somewhat more obscure, their true interpretation shoulde be els where sought, than out of their very writings. But here we haue the aduersaries manifestly disagreeing from vs, yet not al neither those which like shamelesnesse. For there be that graunt both these thinges, that is to say, that the Apostles knew perfectly all the doctrine of saluation, and taught all the same most faithfully vnto the

that the true Christ must therefore be perfectly knowne by the writings of the Apostles & prophets, because they did fully and plainly, both knovv and teach the whole Christian religion, and the same Prophetes and Apostles, do yet in their writinges teach it vnto vs.

Church: which thing in deed they iustly graunt, for as much as Christ him selfe, in the 15. of *Iohn* and the 16. 13. witnesseth this in most plaine wordes: And *Paule* in the 21. 27. of the *Acts*, *Galathians* 1. 8. *Hebrewes* 1. 1. otherwise it should be false, at least in some part, which the same Apostle speaketh: to wit, *That the Church is builded vppon the foundation of the Prophetes and Apostles*: And that, which he witnesseth of the holy scriptures. 2. *Timoth.* 3. 16. 17. Moreouer, that shall be false to, which the same Apostle saith: *That the Church, is the piller of truth.* Vnlesse all truth being engrauen in that piller should be manifest. Other some more shamelesse, suppose there is left vnto these men, whom they call the successours of the Apostles, I know not what excellent thing, and that they doe affirme so assuredly, that they hold, they can not be deceiued in that matter, whose opinion I suppose, needeth not at this time, amongst men of sound iudgement, any confutation.

1. Tim. 3. 15.

But, in the ouerthrow of these two latter, and especially of the last point, I per-

perceiue, that all these men, are altogether of one opinion against vs, for they vrge, I knowe not what vnwritten woorde, which they call Apostolicall traditions. And verely I do not vnwillingly graunt vnto them, that all thinges were not seuerally put downe in writing, according to the circumstances of times, place and persons, which were obserued, either by the Apostles, or by their consent, in the very forme and order of the seruice of God.

But who will graunt, that we must thinke the same of the decrees of the verie doctrine it selfe? Finally, when the aduersaries are bidden to bring forth what these pointes be, then that liuing spirit bewrayeth himselfe, because those thinges, which they will haue deliuered from hand to hand, could neither by woord nor writinges, haue bene deliuered by the Apostles, but they should dissent from themselues. But euen al the fathers of sound iudgement, haue iudged farre other wise, of the most excellent and moste sound perfection of the holy scriptures, with whose testimonies, being

VVhat we ought to think of the vnwritten word.

being a thousand times alleadged, I thought it not good now to fill these leaues.

The interpretation of the vvritten vvord, is not else vvhere to be fet, then from the vvorde it selfe, to wit, by comparing of the places one vvith another: and out of the analogie or proportion of the articles of our fayth.

There remayneth the question to be handled, touching the interpretation of the scripture. Which truely is so tossed to and fro by these men, that they cannot eschew the sinne of blasphemie. There be I confesse some places of the scripture (partly through the ignorance of tongs, partly also, throgh other faults of our owne) so dark vnto vs, euen vntil this day, that as yet euen the most learned interpreters, and such as be of best cōscience, cannot thoroughly agree what should be the proper & natural meaning thereof. There be some thinges also, in the holy scriptures, so profoundly spoken, that euery one maye not lawfullye proceede so farre. To be short, there be some things also written in such terms, that (as *Augustin* saith) it should appeare the holy ghost would whet our diligence in the serching and meditating of them. And vnlesse the necessarie points of doctrine and Christian religion were so playnely and clearly: to be short, so fa-

miliarly

mliarly declared in the writings of the Prophetes and Apostles, that they may be (the holy ghost being present amongst them, whereby God lightneth all his sayntes) manifestly vnderstode in the Church, to what end, shoulde the Lorde haue sent his hearers to the scriptures? Yea that more is, to what ende haue, both the Prophets and Christe himselfe also, and the Apostles spoken, if they would not haue theese thinges, to be vnderstood, which all ought to know?

I will speake something more boldly, which yet I hope I can proue. That we may consent vnto the points of Christian religion, as vnto true groundes, and muche more that wee may applye them vnto our selues, it behoueth surely that wee shoulde haue our eares elsewhere opened, *a fleshly heart giuen vs, to be short, that we should elsewhere be taught than of flesh and blood*, because the church, is the congregation of them, *that must be taught of God, & to whome the arme of the Lord is reuealed*: and that men may vnderstand, what the Prophetes and Apostles, haue truely thought and taught, concerning

VVe cannot by naturall vnderstanding knovv, vvhat the pointes of Christian religion are, but by the writinges of the Prophets and Apostles.

Esai. 53.1.

concerning euery article of our religion they haue neede, not onely of a wit in some measure sharpened, but also of the knowledge of tongues, and of carefull and diligent reading.

For it is one manner of thing, to vnderstande, what this or that man sayth, then so to vnderstand the things, which thou doest perceiue, that thou also approue of them: and not onely that thou vnderstand what the thing is, but also wherefore it is: and comprehension is another thing, than knowledge, euen in prophane matters: and agayne in matter of diuinity this knowledge is another thing, than full persuasion, therefore comprehension belongeth vnto all men that are endued with some iudgement, and vnto knowledge there is required also an outwarde lightning of Gods spirite, by reason of the blindenes of mans iudgment, which gift notwithstanding is common as well to many reuil, as to many good men. But full persuasion, doth seperate the chosen children of God from the castawayes, and is the proper riches of the Saintes.

Comprehension, knowledge, and full perswasiō, must be distinguished in the holy scriptures: of which that, to wit comprehension is naturall, the other is in deede spirituall, but also common to many reprobates: The third is proper to the children of God.

There-

Therefore we require, the exposition of the worde of God, not onely as profitable, but also as necessary, yet not for the same cause, as these mē thinke, neither yet wil wee fet it from ẏ place, frō whome these men suppose we will take it, for they think that that worde is so darkly deliuered, that (as thogh it were some darke thing) it should neede light, fetcht elsewhere then from it selfe, and when we demand of them, from whence at the length this light should be fet, thē they lay vnto vs, ẏ vizard or bare shewe of the Catholique Church, vnder which name somtimes, they lay before the ignorant, these or those of the Fathers: sometimes the fragments of particular or general counsels: to bee short, they lay before them very often, long custom for an argument that cannot bee refused, to which thinges, if a man doe not forthwith consent, he is now layde open to the slaughter of the outragious people (no knowledge of his cause beeing had before) as thogh he were guilty of some haynous crime, committed against God or man, wheras in times past, he was condemned

In what points we doe at this day dissent, when the question is demaunded, touching the interpretation of Gods word.

condemned to bee burned, vnder some certaine colour of law.

And in deede this is now their zeale. But we, that we may in one word declare all thinges which belong to the matter) say, that the Church of Christe is a schoole, in which the worde of the Lorde is not onely barely to be read, and out of the letter written, but also to be taught, that it maye bee rightly vnderstoode, and so to be taught, that exhortations, corrections and consolations, both openly and priuately, maye bee vsed, which in *Paul* is vnderstoode by ỹ name of *Prophecying*. Moreouer this also wee adde, which thing ought here chiefly to bee marked, that the interpretation of those scriptures, are to be set, no where else then out of the scriptures themselues, not onely because the worde of God, is able to giue credite to it selfe: but also, because that truth is reuealed vnto vs no where els, then in ỹ writings of ỹ Prophetes and Apostles. For that saying of *Austen* is well knowen, and is most true, *That the scripture is to be expounded by the scriptures*. Neither shall

Rom. 12. 6.

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it irke me heere to put downe, that notable place out of the 49. Homelie, of the imperfect worke vpon Matthew, because it agreeth altogeather with our times. He that will know (saith he) which is the true Church of Christ, let him not know it but onely by the scriptures. And by and by after. Christians therefore, being willing to receiue the certaintie of true fayth, let them flie to nothing but to the scriptures, otherwise if they shall haue respect to other thinges, they shall stumble & perish not vnderstanding which is the true Church: and by this meanes they shall fall into the abhomination of desolation, which stande in the holy places of the Church.

But to whom shall belong (will these men say) the interpretation of scriptures? Verily all be not Prophetes, all be not teachers. But againe Hosea crieth that both Priestes and Prophetes haue erred in their vision: neither would Christ haue admonished, That the leauen of the Pharises should be auoyded, if we shoulde without exception, haue consented vnto them That sit in Moses chayre: Neither would the false Prophetes be eschued, if

Esay.

Math. 16. 6.
Math. 23. 2.

all

all the Prophetes did speake the truth: neither would *Caiphas*, and the whole Synode of the Priestes, haue condemned Christ, if the holy Ghost, had beene tried without exception to those, that sit in *Aarons* seat: What then?

Antiquitye or noueltye maketh nothing at all, to instruct men to discerne the true interpretation of scripture from the false.

Let these men therefore heare at length, that which we haue so often times cryed out onto deafe men: to wit, that we do not simply reiect, neither the old nor the new counsels, whether they be particular or generall, vnlesse they be plainly theeuish: that we do not simply refuse, neither old nor new writers, vnles they be manifestly, either superstitious or ridiculous, or by cōmon consent abrogated: That we doe not simply cast from vs, the writings, neither of auncient nor new writers, whether they be Ecclesiasticall or Laicall (as these men call them, for God is no accepter of persons, and often times euen by the basest sorte, he confoundeth the pride of the most wise), vnlesse they be plainly wicked, superstitious or foolishe. But this onely we require, which the most learned, and euery the most religious of the

old

ald writers, monish carefully to be don, to wit, that all these thinges, should be diligently examined, according to the rule of the written word of God. For antiquitie and authoritie of those that write, may in deed set some collour of truth vpon falshod, but that it shoulde be true, which disagreeth neuer so little from the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, that truely it can neuer bring to passe. Furthermore, experience it self more than sufficiently declareth, that there haue beene long time since, *builded vpon the foundation layd by the Apostles, not onely hay and stubble, but also yron and ruft*, to be short, lies vppon trueth: All which thinges, muste at the length be consumed by the light and fire of Gods word.

The Creeds of the ancient Synodes & the judgment of the fathers against heretiques, are at no hand reiected by vs: yea rather, they are strongly defended against aduersaries although not as yeelding credite themselues.

Now least these men shoulde againe complaine, that what soeuer hath beene established by counsell after counsell, in the auncient Churche, shoulde by this meanes be called into doubt: we confes, that we doe acknowledge the Creedes, which were alwayes approued by the common consent of the whole Church,

to wit, the Creed of the Apostles, *Nicen*, *Athanasius* his creed, the creed of *Constantinople*, *Chalcedon*, togeather with the curses pronounced in the second counsel of *Ephesus* against *Nestorius*: And that we both with mouth and hart detest, al heresies, which either by open or secret consent of the whole Church, were out of ỳ word of God, condemned in those 4. councels, and also ouerthrowen, in the fifth and sixth councels of *Constantinople*: And also all other heresies whatsoeuer, which after warde, eyther newlye sprong vp, or are newly polished, not ỳ the truth hangeth vpon any Synods or Creedes, but because we acknowledge, that the thinges which are prescribed and established in them, may be rightly iudged, by the writings of the prophets and Apostles: so far of is it, ỳ we take away the authority of ỳ church, or vilipise ỳ consent of the godly, either ancient or new writers, which thing our aduersaries, falsly & shamefully obiect vnto vs.

The conclusion of the disputation of the true Christ, who is the only, true, perpetual, and absolute necessary note of the true Church.

Now the summe of al these things is this, that Christ is the true, perpetual, necessary: & to be short, the onely marke

of the Church: yea I say, the true Christ that is, suche a one, as he from the beginning hath most perfectly (touching the matter and maner of saluation, reuealed him selfe, both in the writings, of the prophets and of the Apostles. For that saying standeth sure: *He that gathereth not with me, scatereth abroad*: and that saying, *that christ is that corner stone of the foundation, vppon whome the whole building riseth vp*: And that onely head, which ministreth vnto his body, that is vnto the true catholique Church, al feeling and mouing: To be short, *he is the dore, the way, the resurrection, and the lyfe.* Therfore, wheresoeuer ỹ word is heard, as it ought to be, there in deed Christe raigneth, and where Christe raigneth, there in deed we iudge the Catholique, visible Churche to be, neither tied to any certaine place, nor vnto the multitude: for *where that dead carkas is*, to wit Christe crucified, there be those Egles: there is saluation, *where that onely name is, in which we must be saued*: there be the children of light, *where that some shineth where be the true sheepe. Where the voyce of*

Mat.12.13. 1.Pet.2.7. Iohn.10.7. Iohn.14.6. Iohn.11.25. Mat.24.28. Act.4.12.

Mat. 18. 20. *That sheepeheard is heard, although two or three onely, throughout all the world, shall be truely gathered together in his name:* And to speake in fewe wordes, where that true seede is sowen, there is the Lords field: and there that haruest groweth, which shall neuer be burned.

But againe, because it falleth out, partly thorough the weaknesse of mans wit, euen in the moste excellent men, partly thorough the wickednesse or negligence of the pastors, that scarce at any time, since ỹ time of the Apostles, ỹ doctrine of Christ, hath beene so preached in the Church, but that some blemish, hath priuely crept in, (which thing appeareth to bee done. euen by the Epistles of the Apostles, and that whilest they also were liuing: Finally, because the Lord hath apointed, not onely that the worde shoulde be taught: but also that it shoulde not be taught of euery man: And for this cause, hath appointed certaine lawes, touching this order. I muste here again declare two things: to wit, how farre it shoulde be necessarie, that that onely marke of the true Church,

Church, that is to say, the preaching of Gods worde, shoulde be pure, and how much we should giue, to the ordination and succession of the Pastors themselues.

Therefore, as touching that former point, I put downe three thinges. One is, that although there be nothing set out vnto vs in the holy Scriptures, which is not most profitable and verie necessary as it were vnto saluation: yet there are certaine chiefe points, and as it were grounds of our religion, which are to be discerned from the rest. The second point is, that there haue beene some matters, which in times past haue beene rudimentes of the Catholique Churche, and may in other times also be rudiments, of some particular churches, yet for all that those points cease not, to belong to the true Churche. The third is, that the religion and marke of the Churche, either vniuersall or particular, is not to be measured by some thing, that this or that Pastor teacheth by worde or writing: neither by that, that some sheepe by them selues haue

How farre it is necessary that the doctrine of fayth, should be pure in the Church.

that the Church eyther particular or generall, may be a true church.

thought this: Or by the disputations of some, whether they be many or few, but by that doctrine, which is commonly receiued in the Churches, so that it be agreable to the word of God.

That all the points of christian religion, are not of the foundation thereof.

Now because these questions are called into controuersie, go to, let vs confirme them by sure reasons & examples. As touching the firste, the thing it selfe sheweth, ỳ there may be variaunce touching some things, & yet the foundation of christian religion, remaine safe: And againe some things cannot be taken away, but that the whole building, be vterly ouerthrown. *He that denieth Christ to haue come in the flesh, is not of God, but is the spirit of Antichrist.* Therefore the companies of ỳ **Dochitæ*, of ỳ ** Marcionits*, and of such like, be not the Church of Christe, whereby it is proued, that the point, touching both the natures of Christe, is an article of christian religion, belonging to the foundation. Againe, the Churche of *Ierusalem* (where in who was better learned, than *Peter*) knew not the calling of the vncircumcised, and yet what true Churche was

1. Iohn. 4. 3.

* They denied Christ, to haue come in the flesh.

* The Marcionistes of whome he speaketh here, did hold that Christ was not true man.

there

there then in the worlde, if the Church of *Ierusalem* were not it? Therefore the point concerning the calling of the vncircumcised, is not of it selfe, of the points of Christian religion, which concerne the foundation. Therfore, there is some difference betweene those thinges which are set forth vnto vs in the scriptures, to be beleeued.

The second also may be proued, by a more euident example. For who doubteth, but that if euer there were any where, a true, and almost onely and wholy Catholique Churche, that was Christes owne household, being conuersaunt and that according to the flesh, with those his twelue disciples? Who likewise is ignoraunt, that the point of the resurrection (the foundation wherof is the resurrection of Christ himselfe) is of so great waight, that the Apostle doth rightly pronounce, that (that beeing abolished) the whole fruit of the Gospell, shoulde be abolished: but ỳ very congregation could scarce beleue, ỳ Christ was yet risen. And *Thomas* gaue not credite, to his own very fellow disciples: yea the

That there are some rudiments of particular Churches. VVhich thing also in times past fell out, in the Catholique church.

disciples, would not haue beleeued, euen their owne verye eyes, if the Lorde had not sayd, *A spirit hath not flesh and bones.*

Luke.24.39.

VVe may not determine of the falshood or truth of any church by the doubting of either many or few.

And that third thing is confirmed, by the examples of the Churches of *Achaia* and *Galatia*, which doubtlesse, the Apostle would not haue called the churches of Christ, and therefore true churches, if hee had therfore thought that the church of *Corinth* had denied that article of the resurrection of the flesh: & the churches of *Galatia*, had reiected the benefite of their liberty, purchased by Christe, because some in *Corinth*, yea perhaps some of the pastors themselues, did doubt of the poynte of the resurrection: and the most part of the *Galathians*, called backe agayn the vse of circumcision and other ceremonies, seeing that yet notwithstanding, the same *Paul* sayth: *If ye be circumcised, Christ doth profite you nothing:* and seeing that he affirmeth that those which urged circumcision, not of ignorãce, but of stubbornnes, *they were remoued alway vnto another gospel.* & therefore he openly calleth thẽ Apostatates or fallers away, and compareth them to Dogs,

Gal.5.2.

Gal.1.6.

Phil.3.2.

that

that is to say, to vncleane beastes. But it is an other thing. to erre through ignorance, than obstinately to resist the truth, as wilful fellowes are wont. Heresie which is without the Church, if it be of some point of the religion, that toucheth the foundation, is an other thing, than being deceiued or an error, which requireth and suffereth it selfe to be taught. To be shorte, the Eclipse of the Sunne, is an other thing, than the absence of the same: and the euening is an other thing than the darkenesse of the night: yea the night it selfe, which the day succeedeth, is an other thing than the darknesse were, *when they couered the depth.* Gen. 1.2.

That some errours may creepe into the Catholique church yea and that in some point of faith, which concerneth the foundation.

These things then being put downe, it shalbe easie to iudge, that euery error doth not take away the name of the true church, and with al that to be most false, which the aduersaries say, to wit, that the Catholique Church cānot erre, and yet that euery error doth not abolish the name of the Catholike Church. For as touching this latter point, if some particular Church may erre, euen in

in some chiefe head or article of Christian religion, and yet it ceaseth not therfore to be a true Church: wherefore shal not a man say the same of al particular Churches, not considered one by one, but vniuersally, for this is the Catholique Church: Truely it is not probable that there liued then any men (when Christ rose againe) better or more perfectly instructed in true faith, then those twelue Disciples: And yet we see this whole congregation, for a time (as I euen now sayd) so to haue doubted of the resurrection of Christ, that for that cause (as *Luke* writeth) *Christ remayned with them fortie dayes after the resurrection*, that he might fully assure them of his resurrection. Wherefore this thing we conclude, that the chiefe points of our religion, ought of necessitie to remaine sound, in the Catholique Church, that it maye be called Catholique: But there may some times fall in some cloud (specially through the negligence of the Pastors) which may some times darken, one while this, an other while that article, which neuer the lesse (when the

Act 1.3.

holy

holy Ghoſt appeareth) ſtraight waies vaniſheth away.

Therefore Catholique is not. (as the vnlearned imagine) alwaies and with out exception the ſame, that right or ſound is, ſeeing that euen ſome vniuerſall error, may continue for a time. And the ſame thing may and ought muche more to be ſpoken of the particular congregations of this vniuerſallitie. And if theſe things be true, euen in the very grounds of our religion: how much more, may wee thinke the ſame to bee true, as often as errours creepe in, by which the very foundations of religion, are not ouerthrown? And this is the ſtuble or chaffe which ſometimes (as S. *Paul* ſayth, *are builded vpon the foundations of the Apoſtles*, which at the length ſhall vaniſh away, when the day of the Lord appeareth. 1. Cor. 3. 12.

But this day ſheweth it ſelfe ſometimes ſoner, ſomtimes later. (So I had almoſt ſayde, all the Byſhops of *Africa* thought with *Cyprian*, that baptiſme adminiſtred by heretikes, was of no force. Which thing, although it were falſe, might

might neuertheles (so long as the sum of fayth remayneth sound and vnhurt) be wrongfully taught and beleeued. But this errour continued not long. There is a like consideration to be had of many traditions, which for that cause, began at the length, falsely to be called, and to be deemed Apostolicall, because that being once confirmed by continuall vse, they were supposed to haue come euen from the Apostles themselues: which traditions also, by reason therof, the day of the Lorde (which hath agayne in our times shined forth) cannot now abolish, without very great contentions. Be it therefore farre from any to thinke, that for such maner of blemishes, some congregations should be thought, not to belong, to the bodye of the Catholique Churche, although godly and diligent Pastors, shoulde giue very great diligence, that these spottes also shoulde be wiped away, with the sponge of Gods word.

That blemishes at the first som times tollerable, cease to be blemishes, and grow to bee cankers.

But this thing first of al must here be marked, that these blemishes and as it were byles or swellings, do some times

so

so farre increase, that they growe to a canker, and that they pull away the very members from the body: which thing the most shamefull examples, both of auncient times, and also of our times, declare to haue fallen out, especially by the fault of the pastors. As for example, superstime or cunning (one sort of it being proper to them that were possessed with ill spirites, and an other common to all that were growen in yeares, and came from *Paganisme* to Christianitie, brought in also by the negligence of pastors, into the baptisme of Infants, that were borne of Christians) was at the beginning tolerated, lenitie, and yet not being looked into of the old Bysshoppes, at the length increased so farre, that in the papacie it was retained as necessarie, and so became a willworship, a matter nowat no hand indifferent: And in some Churches, (although lightened with the Gospell) it is retayned as not vnprofitable, with great shame (truely) to the pastors: of so great importance is it in season to preuent, euen the smalest errors.

The

The ceremonie of anoynting with oyle in baptisme (which was ministred to those that were as it were, to fight against the Deuil, and the fleshe) was in the beginning chaffe, but this chaffe, how farre in processe of time it grewe, we see, when the Crisme also began to be reuerenced, which thing notwithstanding did not fal out in the very water, a true and an essential signe of baptisme. So it is manifest, that the signe of the crosse, was at the beginning an open profession of christianitie, the abuse wherof at the last brought to passe, that the very crosse was set vp in the place of Christ crucified, [illegible] is there any idolatry in all the worlde more detestable. So the remembrances of martyrs, and the funerals of the more famous Byshops, were celebrated, both with Orations in the praise of the, and with incredible concourse of people, from whence by and by after sprang vp inuocations of the dead, at their sepulchers, and in processe of time, the worshippinges of reliques also. The paineting of walles, brought into the Christians

Chrisme in baptisme prefered before water, the element of the sacrament.

stians temples, about foure hundred yeares after the deathe of Christe, and that without any worship thereof, was in deed accounted, haie. But howe farre this blemish hath growne we see, insomuch, that the second of the ten commandements, was vnder that colour, openly by the Papists blotted out: and (which thing cannot bespoken, without the incredible shame of some) that second commandement, is also at this day numbred, by certein men (which should not so deale) amongest the ceremoniall commandements, such was in the beginning, the lenten fast, and some choise or difference of meates, without any opinion of worship added therto. Which things, we nowe see so established, that sundrye and those no small persons; but such as wil seem to be most Catholike, do most obstinately defende, that in the doing of them, consisteth in some respect, the forgiuenesse of sinnes, yea the worthinesse of merites or power to deserue. What I beseech you, could seeme at the first, to haue been more indifferent then for the celebration of the supper, to haue

a table

a table of stone or of wood: But, if the *Grecians* in the celebration of the saide supper, had neuer vsed their * βωμους & the *Latines* their Alters, but had beene content with their cōmon tables (which was in vse in the Apostles times) likely it is, that the controuersie, touching that detestable idolatry of ye masse (by which we see, the whole worlde at this day, to be set on fire) could neuer haue sprung vp.

* That is, their Altars dedicated to Deuils.

Now, to what end, tend these things? to wit, that first in descrying the marks of the true church, hereuos might be distinguished from errors, and haye & stubble, from those things, which eyther of themselues, or by reason of the opinion of worship brought in, are either vngodly or superstitious: and yet that all the gouernours of ye Church, ought to vnderstand, that as the Alter, was not in time past to be builed of stones, garnished by the diligence of man: neither yet that it was lawfull for them, so much as to fasten a naile in the Tabernacle, but according to the paterne which *Moses* had seene in the mount: euen so now also, all

godly

godly magistrates indeede, and all true shepheards, ought to endeuour, that in restoring the temple of the Lord, by so many means fallen down, they shoulde not onely restore those thinges, which haue beene ouerthrown by *Antichrists*, but also that they should most diligentlye wipe awaye all, euen the lightest spottes, that haue proceeded from the same *Antichrists*, although they be, as it were waren hard vpon the walles of the temple: and that marking (partly by the story of former ages, and partly by the beholding of the present ruins of the Churche) these former euils of Satan, they should at no hand suffer themselues to be mocked, by the allegation of the fragmentes, of certaine of the auncient fathers, or by any vayn shew of custom: but rather that they should not leaue of, vntill by doctrine, both the Ceremonies and all the Ecclesiasticall gouernment also, be apted, not vnto some figuratiue Image of shew, which was needful vnder the schoolemastership of the law, but exactly framed, according vnto ẏ moste perfect paterne, which the sonne of God

him selfe by his owne mouth & his Apostles after him, haue most perfectly set forth vnto vs in their writings. But concerning this matter, we wil elswhere speake more fully (as I hope) when we shal answere those notable meanes men, who reprehend vs, as ouer seuere exactors of ꝑ worke, & especially whē we shal seuerally answere vnto the writting of *Cassander*, to the end, al men may vnderstand, that none more hinder the worke of the Lorde, than these *Samaritanes*.

VVhich be the principal points of the Catholique faith or religion.

Now, because I see some (not yelding vnto these things, which we haue spoke in general, cōcerning ꝑ fundamental or principall points of our religion) again to demāde what those shold be: I answer ꝑ these articles are to be called grounds or principles, which being laid, ꝑ whole building remaineth: & which being ouer thrown, al things builded therupon fall to ꝑ ground. And al these things, we confesse to haue bene described w great short nesse & plainnes, out of the word of God in ꝑ Creed, which they cal the Apostles. VVhich thing ought to be added to ꝑ ten commandements, & the Lords praier of

the

the which, that, to wit, ỹ ten commaundements, doth verie compendiously set out the order of Christian life: and this, that is, ỹ Lords praier, doth very briefly also set out, right inuocation and praier. This (I say) is ỹ fundamental, true, and perpetuall mark of ỹ Catholike church, which shall neuer bee blotted out vnto the worlds end: but which neuertheless ought to be expounded, out of the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, fro whence it is taken, that al men may vnderstand it and keepe it, as much as in them lyeth.

Now the order of this expesition is 2. fold: one more familiar, which is necessary for al men: an other more large, and far more plentiful: as we see that the Apostles creed, was afterwardes expounded, by some other Creedes of the holy Synodes, that heresies might bee met withall, & the Consciences established more and more in sound doctrine. Therfore, albeit that to the ende, that some man might be a true member of Christ, it be not necessary, that he should most exactely vnderstande, for what cause

What expositon of Catholique doctrine is required in the Church.

thinges are spoken and set downe, and should know the determinations of disputations in diuinitie: Not euery one ought to know according to his capacitie, what he doth beleeue, and why he doth beleeue, and not to rest in the deuilishe inuention of faith, which they call vnfolded, that is to beleeue as the Churche hath determined, and to aske no further: but to adde also vnto that familiar instruction, the exposition of holy writings, of which Paul setteth before vs foure pointes: *Viz.* to wit, *doctrine, reproofe, correction, and comfort.* All which are by diligent Pastors and teachers, publikely and priuately, to be applied, to the capacities of the beleeuers.

That the true, yea the Catholique church hath more then once wanted, an ordinary and lawfull ministery, and therefore that that ordinarie and lawfull ordination and succession of Pastors, vvas for a time broken off.

It remayneth that we declare, howe much we ought to giue to personal succession and ordination. We haue sayde, that the onely, true, perpetuall, and necessary marke of the catholique Church is that doctrine, which diuersly, and sundry maner of wayes, first by worde, and afterward by writings, hath bene deliuered by the Prophetes, and at the

lasse most perfectly declared by Christe him selfe, and that by his owne mouth, and by his Apostles. For this word, as (euen after Christe him selfe), *Peter* sayth, *is that seede*, by which the Catholique Churche, both at the beginning of the world appeared, and by which also it shall continue, euen vnto the ende of the world. But seed is to no purpose, except it be sowen, and the Lorde, (who both vnder the olde, and vnder the new Testament, appoynted an order for the sowing of this seed, by the ministry of men) hath (I say) necessarily appointed this sowing (for otherwise the spreading abroade of this Churche woulde quickly end) to endure to the ende of the world. Be it so truely. Then thou wilt saye, ordination also and succession of those persons, is a true, perpetuall, and necessary mark of the catholike church, agreeing altogether with that other, to wit, the mark of sowing. So our aduersaries do conclude, but falsly and foolishly. For, (that I may let passe those two thinges already confuted by vs, that is to say, because they babble of the succes-

sion of persons, omitting the succession of that Apostolicall doctrine: Moreouer because ỹ they propoũd an other succession, than that which hath beene begun by the Apostles themselues) either they do not see, or they dissemble that they do see (albeit the sowing also, and the sowers, are required no lesse than the seede, to the tilling of this fielde of the Church) that the same order hath not alwaies bene kept, either of sowing the seed, or of ordeyning them, vnto whome this sowing is committed. And this not withstanding, they ought to haue learned, both by the fore tellings of the prophetes, and also by the holy histories, which things remaineth to be proued of vs. The Church therfore I confes, was neuer without ỹ worde of God. But let these men also shew vs, that there hath bene some one, certaine, & perpetual order both of that sowing, & of the persons admitted to that sowing, and that the same hath bene tied also at all times, to the same lawes of ordination, before that first the lord had consecrated to him selfe the first begotten. *Exod.* 3. 2. and 19. 22.

22. and the 24.5. in whose steed afterward that *Leuiticall* priesthood was ordained almost with infinit ceremonies. *Num.* 8.18. Therfore then at the length began, that certaine & ordinary order of succession & ordination, that is, of sowing, and of those vnto whom the charge of that sowing was committed. Which succession, and which maner of ordayning, if before that time the Church lacked it, it is prooued, that that ordinary succession and calling, hath neither bin alwaies necessary nor continual, seeing that the visible Churche stood so many ages, before both of them.

Now let vs see, whether ý *Leuiticall* priesthod, hath cõtinued without interruption, euen vnto ý cõming of Christ. In deed we read, ý the spreding abroad of *Aarons* posterity, cõtinued vntill the ouerthrow of the tẽple. But euen as we say, thogh *Dauids* stocke were not abolished, yet *Dauids* kingdome (euen as amongst other the prophets, *Ezechiel* had foretold) was broken of, frõ the dayes of *Sedichia*, vnto *Zorobabel*, frõ whose time in steed of kings they were Dukes, and

at the lengthe (the *Asmoney*, taking all power vnto themselues) *Davids* posteritie, I say, in stede of Dukes became Senators, vntill at last they being also taken away by *Herod* a forraner borne, and *Iudea* being reduced to a Prouince, and so in fine as *Iacob* had foretold (all gouernment being taken from *Iudea*) ye sonne of *David* ryzing vp, to sit in the throne of *David* for euer: So it appeareth, that all the Leuiticall priesthode, was not at once broken off, vntil (the eternall priesthood of *Melchisedech* succeeding) it was wholy abolished. For, (to let passe those publique miseries and slaughters of the people, vnder the iudges, and especially that time which is spoken of, in the fiue last chapters of the storye of the Iudges, in which time it is euident that the publike ministery was greatly decaied, and sometimes almoste abolished) who will deny, that there was any true church, in the kingdome of the ten tribes, from the time of *Ieroboam* the first king, vnto the ouerthrow of *Samaria*, and yet that there was no succession, nor ordination of Leuitical priesthod amongst them, appea-

Gen. 49. 10.

reth by this, because it is wrytte of *Leui*, that he departed from ỹ kingdome of the ten tribes: and by that same most heavy complaynt of *Helias*, which is reported by the Apostle, *Rom.* 11. 2. for concerning that which is reported afterwardes of thele hundred prophetes, hid in a caue. 1. *King.* 18. 13. it doth not proue, that there was there, any ordinarye ministery.

The aduerlaries will reply, that the godly *Israelites* went to *Ierusalem*, and therefore, that they perteined to the Leuiticall priesthode. See it so that some went, yet there was some true Churche then, in the kingdome of the ten tribes, not going to the Citie, neyther doing the ordinarye sacrifices, nor reteining anye vse of the Leuticall priesthode.

But agayne these men say, they had notwithstanding colledges of prophets, and assemblies of Godly men also, at their appointed dayes, as appeareth namely out of the 2. *Kings.* 4. 23. and therefore the ordinary succession of the ministery, did not then cease. And neyther doe I conclude out of this place, that

that there was then no holy ministry in the kingdome of *Israell*. But this one thing I gather, that the succession of the *Leuitical* ministry (which was the onely ordinarye ministerye) was then all togeather broken off, in the kingdome of *Israell*. For neither were the Prophetes ordained by the ministrye of men, neither was their order continuall.

They will againe reply, that an ordinary succession may ceale, in particular Churches: but at no hand in the Catholique church, that is to say, vniuersally: seeing that then also the temple continued in the kingdome of *Iudah*. But beside that, I can replie out of the testimonie of the Prophetes, that *Iudah* so behaued hir selfe, not onely in maners, but also in the very worshippe of God, that *she iustified Israell hir selfe*: and that also the temple of the Lorde was shut vp vnder *Manasses*, after that it had beene imbrued, with the blood of the Prophetes: and that horrible idolatry declared vnto *Ezechiel* in a vision: beside these things I say, I furthermore adde

Ezech. 16. 51.

two

two other: one is, that if some particular Church may be a member of the catholique Church (without the marke of succession, and ordinary ordination) it necessarily followeth that those notes, are not that, which the *Logitians* cal proper, after the fourth sort: that is to say, a terme that alwayes agreeth vnto one kinde, and to euery particular of the same kind, whereof we now demaund, and in deed doe iustly demand it, seeing the whole force of the definition, consisteth properly, in the knowledge of the difference. The other is, that if (which thing we haue shewed before) some parte of the Catholique Churche, may lacke that succession, and ordinary ordination for a tyme, it followeth that that thing maye fall out in all particular and seuerall Churches. For why shoulde it fall out to one, rather than to an other? But where this thinge shall fall out, in what generall thing I praye you, maye a man finde that, which he wanteth not in all and euerie singular parte of the same?

But

But leaſt theſe men ſhould agayn cry out, that yet that thing hath not fallen, which might haue fallen out. Let vs proceede further, and let vs conſider, what the ſtate of the Catholike Church was, vnder the captiuitie of *Babilon*. Verely theſe men ſhall neuer proue, that there was then any ordinary miniſtery of the Lawes. For the fable of *Suſanna* is conſuted, but of the true ſtory of *Daniel*, ſo that it muſt be a narration either fabulous, or meerely allegoricall: euen as alſo the booke of *Iudith* is. And though *Ezechiel* ſometimes in ſome place, exerciſed the office of a Prophete (as it is manifeſt by his Prophecies) yet by that it ſhall at no hande bee proued, that the Leuiticall Prieſthode was not diſcontinued.

But thou wilt ſay, Circumciſion then continued. I graunt it, for this was the ſinguler benefite of God: euen as Satan could not (in our time, and in the time of our Fathers) bring to paſſe, but that the Sacrament of Baptiſme ſhoulde remayne. But the ſelfe ſame Circumciſion was not vſed thoſe forty yeeres, being

ing the time of their wandering in the wildernes, where notwithstanding if the Catholike Church were not, it was no where. Seing therefore the Churche may for a time want some sacraments, truely this part of the publique ministerye is not absolutely the perpetuall and necessary marke of the Churche: which thing yet cannot be seyde of the seede of the worde it selfe, for the patent it selfe of a couenaunt, is another thing, than the seale put to the patent it selfe: so that the church may for a time lacke this, by reason of many lets, cast in the way: but that to wit, the worde, it can neuer lacke, although he that dispiseth that, to wit, the Sacrament, despiseth both, and therefore shall worthily be iudged out of the Couenant.

What then? truely the Church can neither at any time lacke the seede of the word, neither the solving, or the solvers: but yet the sluggishnesse and wickednes of the Pastors chiefly hindereth, that we cannot restraine both the solving and the solvers to an ordinarie succession and calling. And this thing falleth

leth out, by two meanes. By one, when the chayres or places be not empty, but they which sit in them, haue entred in, either by the doore, or by the window, and do either wholly neglect their dutie, or mingle cockell with seed, or els sowe nothing but poyson: as such was the state of ỹ ancient catholique church, vnder the moste parte of the vacant gouernments of the iudges: afterwards in *Iuda* vnder the moste of ỹ kings, and at the length, in the times of Christ being conuersant vpõ the earth. By the other, whẽ as that ordinary both sowing, and also ordinary calling of sowers ceaseth, doing for a time as it were, more than little dead (for we doe not acknowledge that these thinges, can all together be abolished before the ende of the worlde) and such was, as we haue sayd, the outwarde forme and face of the Church of the twelue Tribes, and of the Catholique Church, in the captiuitie of *Babylon*.

I say therefore, that the very same thing, hath some times throwen the iust iudgement of God, fallen out in the

Church,

Churche, in respect of the sowing, and the sowers, which often times falleth out in the times of famine and warre, to wit, that there is vtterly no place for sowing. Which when it cometh to passe, all do not yet die, but the hunger starued that remaine, are relieued, by the fruits gathered in the harueſt of the former yeares, euen as heretofore, in the times of *Ioseph*, the *Egiptians* did sow nothing, but in the very seuenth yeare of the famine. So it behooued *Daniell*, *Ezechiell*, *Zorobabell*, *Esra*, *Nehemie*, and the remnaunt of the godly in *Babylon*, when an vsuall tradition was wanting, to be Prophetes and Pastors vnto themselues, ioyning with moſt feruent prayers the continuall reading and meditation of the holy scriptures, as in that story, we reade to haue bene done, vnleſſe we woulde rather say, that *Moses* and the other Prophetes (whose writtinges were then extant, although they themselues were dead long a goe) were notwithstanding their Pastors in this exile, vntill the Lord in his time, should haue mercy vpon *Syon*.

But

That the mark of succession and ordinarie vocation, is not abolished, by euery fault that may fall out in the minister.

But amongest these breaches of the Church, there is yet muche difference. For where the Pastors doe their duties onely negligently, or else offend only in manners, neuertheles the double mark of the Church, which is ordinary and to be seen, remayneth. By the double mark of the Church I mean the seed, and ẏ sowing, and also ordination, if so bee that these Pastors, although negligent, bee notwithstanding lawfully called. And if they mingle only some leauen, *The leauen is to be taken heede off*, but the pastors notwithstanding are to be hard, so farre foorth, as they sit vppon the chayre; not of *Peter*, but of Christ: neither doth such a congregation, therefore ceasse, to bee deemed as a member of the Catholique Churche, (or els the Catholique visible Church is no where) although perhaps no other, but negligent Pastors, corrupt in manners, and mixing some leauen, be found throughout all the whole worlde. Such were in the times of Christe, the Pharisees and Saduces, and the Doctors of the Lawe, whose Leauen hee teacheth, *must bee auoyded*, which yet hee

Math. 16. 6.

com-

commaundeth to bee heard, *so long as they sit in Moses Chaire.* But this place peraduenture, is not of euery one diligently inough marked: for it is to bee noted, oute of other places, that the writinges of *Moses*, and of the Prophetes, were reade bee piecemeale in the Synagogues. Which thing, the Sections noted, euen at this daye, by a true order in the *Hebrewe* Bybles, doe declare. Nowe, vnto this pure and sincere reading, was added an interpretation, full of Beauen: of which sorte are these pointes which elsewhere in *Matthew* are plentifully confuted by Christ. Therefore Christ commaundeth those thinges to bee heard out of the Pulpit, which were by custome, syncerely recited out of *Moses* and the Prophetes, in the Synagogues: but the Beauen, where with they did corrupte the puritye of Doctrine, to bee eschewed. So it is not to bee doubted, but that that outwarde Worshippe in the Temple, was in the times of Christe, diligently exercised without Idolatry: which also Godly men did diligentlye performe, al-

Mat. 23. 2. 3.

though the right vse of the sacrifices, and of the whole lawe, was vtterly destroyed by the iustiziarie Pharisees, and by the Saduces; which denied the resurrection, that is to say, the chiefe ende of sacrifices. What maner of marchandize of high priestes office, there was then, and that againste the prescript of the lawe, appeareth by histories. But this fault of persons, in so great confusion of thinges, did not abolishe the very facts of the priesthode, which did depend, not vpon the priest, but vpon the ordinance of God. For there is some certain meanthing betweene men meerely priuate, and men lawfully called: to wit, when as some (exercising the place of those that be lawfully called) are either thorow ignorance, or thorow winking at them, borne with aland in their name execute some publique office, as we read, that it was ordayned in the lawe of the *Romanes*, concerning one *Barbarius Philippus*, of which matter we haue in an other place spoken more fully. Therefore the Church in deed retayned (and that in Phariseisme and Saduceisme)

cisme) hir note, both of Gods seed, and in some sort also, of the very sowing thereof, although it were some what defaced, and yet neyther Phariſiſme nor Sadduciſme, was a parte of the ſound Church.

But as often as euen openly, the chayre of truth is vtterly deſtroyed, ſo that on the one ſide ſyncere breade is not propounded vnto vs, ſo that a man may receiue it: and on the other ſide, ſome Leauen, is ſo ſet before vs, that a man may not reiect it, but poyſons are drunke to men vnwilling of the ſame, who will account the congregation of theſe Wolues (or of thoſe which followe them) for the true eyther Catholiques or particular Churche. Now I affirme, that the Popedome, that is to ſaie, the Churche of *Rome* (as at this daie they call it) hath by little and little growen to be ſuche a one. Seeing that thoſe thinges beeing in deed fulfylled, which both *Paule* 1. *Theſſalonians* 2. And alſo *Iohn* in the diſcription of the Image of the beaſte, haue now ſo many yeares paſte, ſet before

In the Romiſh church ſuch a one as now a good while it hath been, all the notes of the true Catholique Church, are not in ſome ſort defaced onely, but euen vtterly taken away, as was foretolde by the Apoſtles.

our eyes to behold: and the auncient fathers, both *Greeke* and *Latin* interpreters, *Irene*, *Chrisostome*, *Hierome*, *Augustine*, *Beda*, and *Cardinall Cusan* himselfe also, haue interpreted the same of the seat of *Rome*. For which of those three markes of the catholique Church (wher of we haue shewed, that one of thē onely is vnmoueable and perpetuall, the other we haue declared also to be some time discontinued) remaineth in the popish Church? For to speake first of that proper, perpetuall, and absolutly necessary marke, that is, the holy word written, seeing that that is in the popishe Church, is not set forth vnto the people, but torne in sundry peces, and that also in a strange tongue: and further, seeing that their shamelesnesse hath proceeded so far, that they can not beare the same to be turned into vulgare & cōmon speches, neither yet indure, that the *Latin* interpretation being barbarous, and in many places false, shoulde be amended, by the *Hebrue* and *Greek* copies, is there any man, vnlesse he be by the iust iudgement of God blinded, that will iudge

these

these men, to be the Catholique Church (in which onely there is saluation) and not rather take it to be that *Babylon*, out of which all, that will not perish ought to depart? But some amongst them say. We do not onely receiue the writinges of the Prophetes and Apostles, but also receiue them, and in deed receiue them more large, than yee receiue them. For for one and two places sake, they ad the bookes which are *Apocripha*. As though in deed to haue books decked with gold and precious stones, to worship papers trãsformed into idols, to sing in a strãge tongue, parcels torn in sundry peces, or to hang them about the necke, or to vse them in magical inchantments, be the same, that it is to teach the writings of the Prophets & Apostles, and by these to direct, the whole seruice of God, and to be short, by these to order, the whole life of man.

But againe they saye we haue euery sunday sermons, and the readinges also and homelies of the Doctors: and to be short, admonitions (as they call them) in parishes. Yea, haue truly. But when

what maner ones, of whome, and to what end are they had?

Note. Now, to comprehend all thinges in a few words, seeing there be three wayes of corrupting the holy bokes of scripture, one is, when some thing is taken away from thē: the second is, when some thing is added to them: the third, when some thing is changed in them. Who at the length seeth not, that these men are cōdemned as guilty of so many sortes of falsehod?

That I may beginne with the law. That vnwriten word, which they haue deuised & wil haue to be ỳ chiefest part of ỳ seruice of God, & that authority which they take to thēselues, to make lawes to bynd mens consciences, by what name shal we call it? Now, haue they not vtterly blotted out, without any shame, ỳ second commandement, to the ende they might openly and manifestly, renew al kind of idolatrie, while they haue changed the names onely of ancient Idols? Haue they not oppressed the miserable consciences of Christians, both by new and directly repugnant traditions? and

vnder

vnder that cloake, *Haue they not deuou-* Mat. 23. 14.
*red widowes houses onely (as in times past the Pharisees did)* : but also haue swal-
lowed vp empires and kingdomes : To
be shorte, haue they not ouerthrowen
from the very foundations, the vse and
end of the law?

And in the Gospell (the other and the chiefest part of Gods word) what haue they left sound? First, what maner of Christ do they set forth vnto vs? verely, a christ now in deed indued with a body without a body: do they propound him, 1. Cor. 1. 30.
*as he which was made of God vnto vs wise-*
*dome?* Yea for sooth, so far as he helpeth our natural light. Do thei propoūd him as our whole righteousnesse? for swth so farre as this thing is attributed to vs, who are therto prepared, partly of our selues, and partly by grace, that the reward of eternall life, may, by desert be ascribed vnto the deseruinges of oure righteousnesse. But what if our owne deseruinges be not sufficient? Verely, the deseruings of some certaine saints (whose treasure is not yet in deede drawen drie) purchased by a certayne

price at ẏ hand of these brokers, shal be added vnto vs. And the merites of what saints I beseech you, do they set forth vnto vs? surely, such as the Bishoppes of *Rome* them selues, shal put into their calender, and such as euery one shal chuse to him selfe for Patrones and intercessors. But doe they propound Christ as our sanctification? yea for sooth againe, so far as he augmenteth the remnants of our naturall holinesse. Doe they propound him, as our onely redemption? in deed they doe it in worde, but performe nothing lesse in deed. For they except ẏ satisfaction of punishment, which being granted, they make God himselfe most vniust. For what is more wicked, than to require of him, which is not in fault, satisfactory of punishmẽts? And to what *ende hath the Lorde borne our sinnes vppon*
Esai. 53. 4. 5. *the tree?* to what *end hath our chastisment rested vpon him?* But now, seeing we are come to those satisfactions, doe they not most manifestly mocke with God and men, when they teach, that in the sprinkling of coniured water, in tapers, in spittle, in oyle, in the signe of the crosse,

in

in choyce of meates, in the murmuring vp also of certaine prayers not vnderstood, in the prayers of counterfeit saints for the most part in the worshipping of images, in the ringing of bels, in a certaine kinde of apparel also, and that after death suche satisfactions doe consiste: what more? O the moste abhominable wickednesse that hath at any time bene committed of any man, in the very real offering of Christ him selfe for the quick and the dead, which is therfore so much the more effectuall, as they say by how muche it is the more often reiterated, but in deed, is an open & manifest treading vnder foot, of the sacrifice, made once for vs: when they teach I say, that satisfaction for the punishment of sins, may be bought at their hands, both for vs that liue, and also for them that be dead, scorched in that their fier of purgatory? What maner of thing therefore is this Gospell? And what manner of Christe is this of the Romishe Popedome? Who also perceiueth not, by the conference of the word of god, that these men, by their doctrine of *Opus operatum*,

that

that is of the worke wrought, haue ouerthrowen all the vse of sacraments? What I may saye nothing of the destroying of the trueth of Christe his bodye, of his Ascention into heauen, and of the article of his descending out of heauen. And that by the opinion of Transubstantiation, they haue ouerthrowen the definition of a Sacrament: And that they haue polluted the Sacrament of Baptisme, with infinite corruptions: And that they haue taken awaye, euen at the firste, one Element of the Supper of the Lorde: And whilst that afterwarde by a more than abhominable wickednesse (chaunging that Sacrament, into that detestable propitiatorie Sacrifice) they haue vtterly taken awaye, all that holy action, and therefore openly haue by violence pulled away the seale of the couenant of the new Testament: To be shorte, that they haue, by as many false Sacraments, as it pleased them to deuise, taken to them selues, the authoritie of Jesus Christe, oure onely lawe gyuer: Therefore what parte of

Gods

Gods worde, haue not these men corrupted, or rather cleane taken away? And then where is that onely, true, perpetuall and necessarye marke of the Catholique Churche? Where is that Seede, whiche beeing taken away, the spreading of the Church also vppon earth, muste needes be taken away?

Now, if the question be, touching that Ecclesiasticall gouernement (that I may speake some what more fully of this matter, than heretofore I haue done) what I beseeche you, can a man finde, in the Popishe cleargie, but that Image of the beast? Hath not this high Bishoppe succeeded the other high Bishoppe of *Rome*, which was wont to be therin the hyre of the Gentiles? What say I? Hath not that Romishe Pope, snatched to him selfe, (by occupying nowe at the laste, and in some ages here to fore, by sittinge in *Rome*) the verye name, and all the authoritie of the verie Emperour of *Rome*? For the thinges whiche yet remayne there, beeing Reliques not so muche

of

of the Romaine empire, as of ỳ *Germane* kingdome and gouernment: what are they more I pray you, but a bare shelue and name, not onely because, the emperours themselues doe of their owne accord, at this day, worship the feet of this beast, but also, because he suffereth, not so much as one of his false clergie, to be subiect, to any secular power, as they call it? yea rather who perceiueth not, this wicked fellow, not contented, with this so great wickednesse, to be the very same person, whom *Paul* fore told *should* sit (after the empire of *Rome* was de-
2. Thes. 2. 4. stroyed) *In the temple of God, and exalt him selfe, aboue all that is called God?* For is not this he, that openly affirmeth, that he muste bee iudged of no man, no not of the Aungelles? Who (if his price be giuen him) boasteth that he can open both heauen and hell? who at his pleasure openly breaketh all lawes both of God and men? who also more than once, with in these few yeares, hath vndone lawes established by nature it selfe: which wickednesse also the prophane city of *Rome* in time here to fore,

(in

(in the raigne of *Claudius* the emperor) abhorred, who hath sold euen for a farthing those very canons, whose name was wont, to make a fraide the ignorant people.

And as for those purpled Cardinals, what other thing are they, than an Image, not of ỹ auncient senate of *Rome*, but of that senate which serued the emperors, and deuiding the gouernement betweene them: but who is so ignorant of the state of *Rome*, that doth not perceiue, that that distribution of gouernments, is a picture of ỹ empire of *Rome* ouerthrown, which thing also the Bishops of *Rome* themselues, and the writers that be addicted to them, do witnesse? And as concerning other ecclesiasticall functions, such as they were ordained of Christ by his Apostles, what doth there remaine among them, but most vayne names and bare titles? For the office of a bishop, which in the beginning, that is, while the Churche florished, was (as *Hierome* also witnesseth) nothing els, but the office of an elder, whilst euen immediatly after the time

of

of the Apostles, it proceeded to those heights of dignities (or as they themselues speake) prelacies, (of which we haue before spoke) is now a good while ago, wholly vanisht awaye amongest them.

Nowe what is it with them to bee a minister? Is it to be appointed to feede some flocke? Is it to haue ouersight of manners, and to beare rule in the Censures of the Church? No in deede, but to haue authoritie to offer Christ againe? What is it to bee a Deacon? Is it to take charge of the goodes of the Church, and rightly to dispence them to the ministers, and the poore, and to render an account of that which is receiued and layde out? Fye, fie, for this (except alwais the yeelding of accounts) is rather the onely chiefe and common office, to all of the whole Popish clergie, especially of the Pope himselfe: and that so openly and so carefully indeede, or rowtously rather exercised, that they exact, (euen of those that bee deade manye yeeres before) a greate Tribute, and, vnto them that be aliue, they doe not



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freely giue anye thing, though neuer so little. Therefore there is no suche, eyther Bysshoppe or Minister among them, as the apostle alloweth of: and as for Deacons, not so muche as one at all. And yet these bee the men, that obiecte vnto vs, the succession of the Apostles. And if so bee, that that one olde Canon so often times repeated in the aunciente Synodes, and altogether agreeable to the woorde of God, did preuaile, to wit, that that ordination which is boughte by money (that I may omit the principall parts of a iuste ecclesiastical calling, that is to say, trial and election, ioined with the free consent of the whole Churche, which are wholly abolished by them, if a man consider the thing it selfe,) should be iudged I say, altogether void, what marke of Apostolicall ordination, shall there bee founde amongst them: vnlesse happelye they meane, that it is one and the selfe same thing, to mocke at the order instituted by the Apostles, and to keepe that Order

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diligently, which hath beene deliuered frō hand to hand: and vnlesse they would proue, that lawfull and currant coyne, were to be knowen from counterfeit mony, by the bare image, grauen vpon it, and not rather, by the matter it selfe, especially as often as, they shewe the same image to both parties.

To be short therefore, what maner of one is that Catholique church, in which in steed of true Christ, a most false idoll, at least wise, in respect of his office, is set vp: and wherein in steed of Gods pure word, partly the traditions of men, and partly, the traditions of the Deuill are placed: and where also in steed of succession, & Apostolicall ordination, nothing hath place, almost but most manifest and detestable, euen to the Deuill him selfe, as it were, both byying and selling of soules redeemed by the bloud of Christ. in so muche that they would haue it to be accounted, an vnlawfull thinge to searche into these matters, yea so farre haue they proceded that they would condemne men (though their cause be not heard) of high treason against God and

man

man, whereas on the other side if a man should graunt these things, there should be nothing so wicked, so blasphemous, and so horrible to be thought, which a man might not with their good leaue & liking, think, speak, and write.

But (these men wil say) although we were nothing lesse, than we will seme to be, doth it followe that the name of Catholique Church, which yee take frō vs, doth agree vnto your Churches? No verely. Wherefore we haue in vayne now a long time agoe desired triall to be made, by the matter it selfe, if their bare deniall may be accepted. We therfore affirme, that the three notes of the Catholique Church (to wit, the seede of the written worde, and the right and lawfull Ecclesiasticall calling and succession, all which we haue restored, are in our possession, and stand on our side. These things they stoutly deny. In deed this controuersie cannot be decided in a few words, neither do I at this present goe about it. But that which I had taken in hand to proue, I hope I haue performed, to wit, that the false and

That our Churches haue all the true markes of the Catholique Church, and specially the pure vvorde of God.

counterfeit notes of the Church, which they alleaged, are sufficiently confuted, and the true notes of the Churche set forth and approoued.

For it is one thing, to dispute of those markes, which they are, and another to dispute, who haue them. Notwithstanding, because I haue in few wordes declared, that they haue not those marks, this thing also I may now speake, that we haue at least, two very waighty conjectures, which make for vs agaynste them: to wit, that in discerning and trying of opinions, we stay our selues, vpon the only written word of God, that is, the writings of the Prophets and Apostles: and that we require the interpretation of it, by the onely conference of places, and proportion of the articles of fayth. Neither do we refuse the writinges of any, either old or new author, so y they may be examined, by the rules afore layd: by Gods worde, and the proportion of faith. But what these me obiect against these vpright requestes, it sufficiently appeareth.

Now in the question of succession and ordi-

ordination, they haue thought that not many yeares agoe, they haue found out, a more certain reason to dispute against vs. For they demaund euen with great loftinesse and pride, that we shoulde shew them, whom they haue succeeded, which in our times haue established our Churches, as though we were no better able, to shew our original, thā the *Donatistes* coulde theirs. We aunswere that the doctrine which we defend, hath (euen from the time of the Apostles, although heresies haue assaulted it, & the Romish false bishops, and others, made drunke by ẏ harlot, haue by al ẏ meanes they could, and that for the space of certaine yeres polluted it) continued notwithstanding, euen vntill our times, & shall continue, euen to the end of ẏ world: and that about 200 yeeres since this light of the Gospell began againe, (and that through the singular goodnes of God) in ẏ west to apeare, out of ẏ filth of popery, & those hiddē places, into which these mē had thrust it, vntill ẏ cādelsticks, which were take away, were set again in their places, & by that meanes the elect people

That our Churches, haue the true Apostolicall succession.

of God, did from all quarters flow together vnto the sayd truth.

But as concerning the succession of the holy ministery, we say, *that that ministery of iniquity (which the Apostle witnesseth in his time to haue beene begun,* was not accomplished, but in some processe & length of time, and therfore ỹ that old Church of *Rome* became, & that but by little & litle, of Apostolical, Apostatical, that is, fallen from the truth: and we affirme that other Churches (as it is euident by histories) did not straightwaies fall away from the foundation, but the verely, when as in the church, the false bishop, *and sonne of perdition in deed,* calling him selfe the vniuersall head of the Church) did at the length, *exalt himselfe aboue all that is called God.* And that this was don when the kings and Princes, yea, and the very Pastors themselues, in other countries, being bewitched by this harlot, had submitted themselues to the feet of *Antichrist*. Now, when, & by what degrees and steights that hath bene brought to passe, cannot else wher be better not only known, but euen perceiued

2. The. 2. 7.

2. The. 2. 4.

ceiued almost by the very eyes, than by the very liues of the bishops thē selues, declared by good and sufficient writers: ẏ euents and falling out of things iustlye agreeing with the foretellinges of ẏ Apostles, and ẏ expositions of the learned, both ancient, and also certaine new writers, which our very aduersaries, dare not refuse, in so much that ẏ which the Apostle heretofore spake of his ministry, *that his Gospell was hid in deed frā them that should perish, & whome the God of this world had blinded, that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ should not shine vpon them*, the same we may now most truely affirme of this wicked Antichristian sinck, faining or pretending the name of the Catholique Churche. Wherefore we haue next after the Apostles, for successors, those very right inding pastors, not onely of the *Roman* church, but of other churches also, whose succession (beeing broken of by these wolues & tirants) we haue begun thorow Gods goodnes at the last to restore: so farre of is it, either that we are destitute of the lawful argument of succession,

2. Cor. 4. 24.

on, or that they shoulde bee able to alleage any Apostolicall succession.

That the Catholique Church hath bene, and in some respect as yet is, in the Popedome though the Popedome be not the Catholique church nor any part thereof.

Therefore say these men, where was that Catholique visible Church, aboute two hundred yeres past? Christ himself maketh answere for vs, that it hath bin heretofore, and as yet in some respecte is, *in the handes of the wicked husbandmen*, who themselues, *slewe the seruauntes of the Lorde, being sent vnto them, and with all, as much as they coulde, euen the Sonne himselfe, beeing cast oute of the Vineyard:* and in steede of him, they haue placed a Christ in wordes, wherwith thei mocke the people, but in deede euerye one, euen the wickedst of theire owne sort, that they can or could get. But it is well, that neyther the eternall keeper of that vine, can againe in deede be caste out, neither could againe be slaine. who liueth vnto God, and who also nowe againe appearing, hath begun, to lette out that Vineyard, to good and faithfull husbandmen, *Paule* also answereth in oure behalfe, foretelling that which wee se fulfilled: To wit, that that wicked one, shoulde *vsurpe to*

Math. 21. 33. 34.

*him*

*him ſelf the Temple of the Lorde, vntill the Lorde ſhoulde agayne diſcouer him. Iohn alſo aunſwereth that that woman, hauing lately brought foorth hir Childe, hath togeather with hir Childe, layen hidden in the wilderneſſe, free from the Dragon, who truſted to, and vſed alſo, and was euen as it were vpholde with the power of Kinges and Princes: And that that holy Citye, hath in the meane time continued ſure, not for a ſmale time, but for two and forty monethes, or a thouſand two hundred and ſixty dayes.* But we leaue the accoumpt of thoſe dayes to ſharper witted men: we vrge onely the matter it ſelfe. Therefore, to ſpeake plainely, we ſay, that ſo long as that great *Michaell* did appeare by little and little, killing that Dragon with the ſwoorde of his woorde (which hee hath agayne committed to his faythfull ſeruauntes) or with the ſpirite of his mouth, that ſo long the Catholique Churche, (that is to ſaye, euery number though neuer ſo ſmal, of ſuch as helde faſt both the perſonne, and alſo the office of the true Chriſte) laye hidde in the filthineſſes 2. Theſ. 2. 4.

of the *Romish Babylon*, whilest ỳ wicked one with his angels, vsurping the seate of the ministery, and the harlot that sate vpon the seuen hilles, did make ỳ worlde drunke with her dreggs.

But they say, that this true Churche, ought always to be visible.

To this, if I shall aunswere, that the true Church indeed, hath alwaies beene visible, and so shall be, so farre forth as she consisteth, of true visible members, and that it is not a counterfayte thing: and also that it is visible so farre forth, as it hath outward and euident marks: & yet not in such sorte visible: as though they that embrace true religion, should always so agree, that euery man might pointe out with this finger, both who they are, and where they are: if I saye I shall aunswere this, I shall indeede speake, as the matter is, and that which I haue a little before, by reasons and examples declared. But I make not this place my refuge: for I saye, that if wee will fetch recordes, euen from the Apostles themselues (who haue as it were with their finger poynted oute this wicked

In what sense the true Church is called visible.

wicked one, and all his false Church) that then we shall find, that there scarce hath beene any age, but that therein, so soone as this Antichriste began to shew his head, the Lord hath alwayes stirred vp some, who did set themselues against his tyrannie. If they denie this thing, let them laye a wager, but withall let them giue pledges or sureties for ỹ performaunce, & I doubt not but we shall shew forth euen to al men, ỹ the thing is so (vnlesse they had rather be willingly blynd) yea and that by good and sufficient witnesses, and by cleare, euident, and manifest testimonies, drawen out of their very owne courtes and records.

But the aduersaries cannot so be bridled, but that they will reply, demanding at the last, what laying on of hãds we are able to alleadge, that they haue receiued, by whõ, in our time our churches haue bene established. For so I remember, *Spensa*, a Doctor of the *Sorbonistes*, did cry out against vs, by whome afterward there was published concerning these matters, a boulome verye grosse, and full of slaunders.

That the true laying on of hands remayneth vvholy with vs.

First

Hovv farre forth the laying on of handes hath beene counted necessari to a lavvfull calling.

First I answere that, which he himselfe elswhere hath noted out of *Hierom*, against the *Luciferians, which place also *Gratian* hath put into his decrees: to wit, that the laying on of handes after baptisme perteineth rather to the honor of priesthood (as they call it) than to bind anye by necessitye of lawe, to observe it. After this sort therefore I saye, did *Hierome* iudge whome they call vppon amongste their Sayntes. But they will replye forsoth that he disputeth of laying on of haneds in confirmation, and not of laying on of handes in ordination, as they are woonte to speake. Whiche that I maye graunte to bee so, (although *Spensa* thoughte otherwise) what shall this replication or exception helpe them: for they themselues do not onely number confirmation among the Sacraments, but also (when it pleaseth them) they account it more excellent, than Baptisme it selfe. But let vs omit this thing. They confesse (vnlesse they will dissent from *Bernard*, in his Epistle 77. who notwithstanding, standeth bothe vppon the worde of God, and

*So called of one Lucifer, vvho helde that the soul vvas of the substance of the flesh.

and also vppon the authoritie of *Austen* and *Ambrose*) that those whiche are of the yeeres of discretion, are blotted out of the Churche, for contempt of Baptisme, and not for the want of it. And what shall let vs, that wee maye not muche more speake the same thing, of the laying on of handes, vsed in giuing orders: vnlesse peraduenture, they shall saye, that that is more to bee required vnto the holy Ministerye, than Baptisme vnto saluation. But howe can these excellent seruauntes of God, seeme to haue contemned the laying on of handes, which in our time, by a verye Heauenlye inspiration, haue deliuered the Churche from the Tyrannye of Antichriste, when as they had none, of whome they could lawfully, euen by the warrant of the olde Canons themselues, aske, or receiue the same: for I haue before shewed, & yet affirme this thing, that there can not be found one amongst the whole clergie of *Rome*, which is able, by the pure and auncient canons, to defend their ordination to be lawfull. What say I: It appeareth that

euen

euen in the most pure Churche also, the laying on of handes, was not counted so necessary: for who I beseech you laid his handes vpon *Philip*, that of a Deacon he
Act.8.4. shold be made an Euangelist? who laid handes vpon them, in that firste dispersing of themselues abroad at *Hierusalem* (the very Apostles also being ignorant therof) preached the Gospell with so great fruit in *Samaria*? but these men. *Peter* and *Iohn* were afterwarde sent,
Act.8.14. who should lay their handes vpon them. Yea for sooth vppon those who beleeued and were baptised, for as for thē which firste had preached the Gospell vnto thē: there is no mentiō at all made of them. But let vs put the case that this place were to be vnderstood of these men also. The Apostles therefore ratified that, which the other as occasion serued had done, euen before examination, and before ordinary election, not meaning to make the laying on of handes, to be absolutely necessary. And if these men be the successors of the Apostles (as they will be called and accounted) why haue not they them selues also, & that by the

example

erample of the Apostles, made halfe, to approoue at the least, the zeale of godly men? Or why did they not helpe, the attempt of that Archbishop of *Colen*, rather thã they should haue betrayed him to that Romish *Antichrist*? for a reward also, of which wicked deed *Gropperus* had the Cardinals hat bestowed vpon him, a couer in deed worthy for suche a cup. For sooth (they will say) becausse ye are heretiques. Therfore the question must be of the doctrine and not of the laying on of handes, and then (as I hope) we shall get the victory.

But they will againe reply that that thing was lawfull at the first, when the Churches were springing: but now an order beeing once established, the same thing is not lawfull. I aunswere that I confesse, there ought great regard, to be had of the times, & that they are not to be borne with all, who violate the lawes of the Church, beeing well established. But what if I shall say that the lawes of right and lawfull ordination are not violated by vs, but that (when they were taken away and defaced by them,

them, that fayned them selues to be the keepers of that order) we haue applyed our selues to the restitution, and restauration of them: For, that this thing is so, it appeareth by this, that (excepting the ceremonies which are iustly abrogated) al thinges cõmanded in the word of God, and prescribed in the auncient pure canons, are obserued exactly in our Churches, but amongst them, manifestly neglected. Now, who, when Pastors by common consent, are chaunged into Wolues, woulde saye, that the sheepe shoulde looke for such manner of ayde, from Wolues: and that shoulde bee condemned, whiche after the example of the Prophets, doth willingly set him selfe againste wolues? Let this controuersie therefore be firste disputed of, before the question be made, touching the forme of ordination: and let these men leaue of to boast of the apparell and outwarde shewe of Pastors, when *as inwardly they be rauening wolues*. Mat.7.15. Merely Christ commandeth true Pastors to be distinguished from false, not by ỹ laying on of hands, *But by their fruits*, ỹ is, Mat.7.16.

by

by doctrin and maners. But what will their Pastors that be made, by Bulles and licences, answere to these things?

They being inforced, to condemne extraordinary vocations, and that more than once, and without exception also, at the laste they flie vnto myracles, which they will haue of necessitie to be requyred, to this extraordinary vocation. But if a man bydde them alleadge, oute of what place of Scripture, they haue at the length drawen this rule: then it necessarily followeth, eyther y they can speake no more than fyshes, or els bewraie extreem shamelesnesse.

That myracles are not necessary to proue anye holy, lavvfull vocation, either ordinarie or extraordinarie.

Now, firste it is manifest that the gyfte of myracles, hath alwayes beene free, that is, set in the power of God alone, who hath gyuen the same at certayne tymes, and to certaine persons: Therefore we can make no rule of it. Nert, seeing that not onely Christ hath foretolde, but also the olde and newe storyes witnesse, that this gyft, was common both to true, and also to false Prophetes, what madnesse shall it argue, to bee desirous to haue the false sending,

ding to be discerned from the true, by miracles?

By what meanes false vocations may be properly discerned.

Then you will say, it shall be lawful for euery one to teach in the Church? no in deed. For who soeuer (where there is place for order) dispiseth that order, he declareth by this very thing, that he is not of God and therfore not to be heard. Therefore the *Donatistes*, who were in deed *Schismatiques*, are by this reason iustly cõdemned, because, though it had bene most true, which they obiected vnto *Occilianus*, yet the order of the church was not for that cause to be broken, and they were not to be borne with, when for the defection of some Churches, they cryed out, that all the world was fallen away. But where a generall disorder, vnder the shew of order, beareth sway, and no remedy can be looked for, from the authours of this mischiefe: then doubtlesse, this must be performed that euen as when a fier is rayled in a City, those men selling, or setting the city it selfe a fier, which by the ordinances of the city, ought to haue come to the quenching of that fier, it is the part of euery

good

good Citizen, to carrye water, yea euen without order, and to cast it vppon the flames: so in this, much more dãgerous fire of the Temple of the Lorde, it is the duetie of euery godly man, as muche as in him lieth, to set him self against that euil: and also of the godly magistrate, to prouide that a lawfull order beere stored. So haue the godly Prophets in times past done: so haue ỹ godly kinges *Ezechias* and *Iosias* done: and vnlesse ỹ verye christian Emperors, when heresies bare greate sway, had interposed their authoritie, none had more beaten downe the Church (as at the length we see it to haue bene done) than they that gouerned the chiefest seates. And if notwithstanding all this, there haue beene no ordinary vocation, in the times of these ancient Synodes, we muste know that that fell out in deed, because, that a lawful order then established in the church, was not altogeather abolished, as it is manifest that it hath beene performed, now sundry ages since, throwe the tyranny of the false Romish Bishop: the remayning amongest them not so much

as a very darke shadow of the principall parts of Ecclesiasticall vocation: to wit, of triall and election: but (after a most filthy sale of all thinges), they vsing onely a vicelike kinde of laying on of hands, thereby to deceiue the comon people.

VVe vvant not euen that laying on of hands vvhich the false church of Rome, doth vntruly make simply necessarye to a lavvfull calling.

But though these thinges were not forcible (which indeed are yet notwithstanding most strong) what doth an extraordinary vocation appertaine to vs? For it is most manifest, that those firste restorers of Gods house, in the dayes of our forefathers, to wit, *Wickliffe, Hus, Hierome of Prage, Luther, Bucer, Oecolampadius, Zwinglius, Pellican, Haller*, and very many other) had the selfe same laying on of hands that these men require, giuen them by their Bishops, to teache the people: by whome afterwardes the Churches were, by little and little restored: In which Churches also, we affirme, that the true vocation of pastors, Doctors, and Deacons, was restored. Now I call that a true calling, which is according to the prescript of Gods word.

But

But here againe our vnorderly ordinaries suppose, that they haue found out somewhat, wherin they may manifestly blame vs. For they deny, that albeit those men, whom euen now we named, were ministers, ỳ therfore we are lawfully ordayned, seeing that bishops only may ordayne ministers, muche lesse say they, can we be bishops. I in deed do willingly leaue vnto them, al this state of bishoppely gouernment, whereof I plainely say, that the holy Ghost was not the author, but mans wisedome, and vppon which, vnlesse we perceiue that God hath layed a curse, verely we do as yet see nothing at all: and we foster a Viper in our bosome, which will again kill the mother. But of this matter we will speake in an other place.

The laying on of hands, belongeth to the presbiterie and not to that state of Byshops which men haue deuised.

Now onely I demaund of these men, from whence they haue set this: for soth from the second Canon of the Apostles, (as they call it). But *Gelasius* the Pope himselfe doth recken these Canons, amongst the writinges counted *Apocrapha*: to wit I suppose, at the least for the titles sake. For he must needes be too impu-

impudent, that woulde deny these Canons, to haue bene made in more ages than one, so farr is it of, that ridiculous inuention (attributed to I cannot tel to what *Clement*, and lately published in *Greeke* and *Latin*, in which the Apostles are brought in one by one establishing these matters, may bee allowed of any man that is of any sound sense or iudgement. But to what end should we handle these thinges so largely? That the Euangelists were aboue the ministers of which we speake (for otherwise *Peter* the Apostle, calleth euen him selfe a fellow minister with thē. 1. *Pet.* 5. 1.) these men dare not deny, because the Apostle him selfe setteth them before Pastors and Doctors *Ephe.* 4. 11. But euen *Paul* him selfe witnesseth, that *Timothe*, not appointed a Bishop to *Ephesus*, or any other Churche, but an Euangelist, and the companion of *Paule* the Apostle, did not receiue the imposition, or laying on of handes, no not from *Paule* him selfe, but from the presbiterie, that is, from the companie or felowshippe of Elders. Wherfore if these men that mind to de-

send the false bishoply tyrannie, be disposed to reason, let thē dispute not with *Geminianus* (as y ciuil lawiers are wont to say) but with *Paul* him selfe. We verely thinke those to be lawfully ordayned, who hauing according to the Apostles rule, an exact inquirie of their doctrine and maners going before, and a free and holy election, by the consent of the whole Churche, which they are to gouerne, are consecrated and dedicated to God by solemne prayes, and the very rite of laying on of handes vsed (if men shall so thinke good) but yet simple, and of it selfe, and not defiled with any traditions of men.

Now seeing these things are so, I say that the fauourers of the false Romishe Churche, doe in vayne set out or obiect, those three notes of the Church: to wit, succession meerely personall, a calling sundred from the doctrine of the Apostles: and the laying on of hands. And I say this, both because that none of these by it selfe, can be either, a true, or simple necessary, or perpetuall note of the vniuersal Church: and also, because that

The conclusion of the vvhole Treatie.

though it were so, yet that no one of these notes at all, can be founde, in the false Romishe Church, which doth notwithstanding cal hir selfe, (though most falsely,) the vniuersall Church: and on the other side I affirme, that that onely true, necessary and perpetuall marke of the Catholique Churche, that is to say, that doctrine, which is most perfectly contayned in the wrytings of the Prophetes and Apostles, doth once agayne shine bright and cleere in our Churches: and to be shorte, that the very personall succession, vocation, and ordination of the holy and right ministrie, are restored in the same our Churches: and that we haue not forsaken *Syon*, but haue *fled out of Babylon* as the Lorde warneth vs: Reuel. 18. 4. that, wee haue not rent in sunder the Church, but following *Pauls* fact, in the Church of *Ephesus*, mentioned *Acts*. 19. 9. *haue seperated Disciples to the Lord*: and that we haue not by the example of *Ieroboam*, or the *Donatistes*, set vp *altar against altar*, *but casting the altar brought* 2. King. 16. 10. &c. from *Damascus*, out of the Lordes house, we haue begun to restore the true and

sincere

ſincere worſhip of God, which worke also I hope (although Sathan, do by his miniſters ſet himſelfe againſt the ſame, both within the Church, and without it) ſhall yet notwithſtanding (*when that ſonne of perdition, ſhall at the laſt be thorowly ouerthrowen, by the ſpirit of Gods mouth*) be bleſſedly atchieued and finiſhed. 2. Theſ. 2.

τῷ θεῷ δόξα

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Robert *Walde-graue*, *dwelling* without Temple-barre, in the Stronde, neere vnto Somet-ſet houſe.